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# THE Baptist Record

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## BRIEFS

### GRAHAM LAYS IN CAPITOL IN PRISON-MADE CASKET

MONTREAT, N.C. (BP) — The late beloved evangelist Billy Graham, who died Feb. 21 at the age of 99, was only the fourth private citizen to be allowed to lay in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. It was also the first time anyone could recall that a pine-wood coffin fashioned by prisoners' hands was used in the Rotunda. The plywood casket with a wooden cross nailed on top was built by inmates of Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, the largest maximum security prison in the nation. Graham's late wife Ruth was also buried in one of the handmade coffins upon her death in 2007.

### 2017 SBC ANNUAL NOW AVAILABLE FOR VIEW

NASHVILLE (BP) — The 2017 Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is available for download and text search at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (SBHLA) website, sbhla.org. The 2017 edition joins annuals archived to the SBHLA's 1845 inception. The annuals are readily access to SBC history and news including meeting proceedings, entity reports, statistics, sermons, state convention information, and lists of staff, trustees, and committees, said SBHLA director Taffey Hall. "Anyone from anywhere can view and keyword search the annual proceedings from 1845-present, online," Hall said.

### COMPENSATION SURVEY OPEN TO PASTORS, STAFF

DALLAS (BP) — Pastors and church employees are invited to participate in the biennial SBC Church Compensation Survey, a resource used by churches of all sizes to determine fair wages and benefits. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and is available at GuideStone.org/CompensationSurvey. Survey respondents can enter to win an iPad. The survey's results will be made available in the early fall, in time for many churches considering their 2019 budgets. The survey is the largest free church compensation study in the U.S.

## Graham, 99, now in the presence of God

### Southern Baptist leaders praise life, mourn passing of an evangelistic 'giant'

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — William Franklin "Billy" Graham Jr., 99, an ordained Southern Baptist minister and the most recognizable Christian evangelist of the 20th century and beyond, died Feb. 21 in his North Carolina home.

Graham's passing sparked an outpouring of praise, respect, and gratitude for his unshakable commitment to declaring Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the peoples of the world in fulfillment of the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20.

Among Southern Baptists — with whom Graham counted himself — a range of leaders underscored the broad scope of the famed evangelist's influence.

■ **Steve Gaines**, current two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and senior pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, said, "Billy Graham is with Jesus. He has seen and talked with our beloved Savior.

May the awareness of his death result in many people hearing the Gospel and being converted to Jesus Christ!

"Only eternity is expansive enough to measure the impact Billy Graham had on our world."

**Kevin Ezell**,  
North American  
Mission Board  
president

"He is the nearest thing to a true prophet that Christians have had in the past century. He was a man of integrity, simplicity, love, and evangelistic fervency. He preached to more people than anyone else in the history of Christianity. He was a legendary man of God, and every born again Christian will miss him."

■ **Jim Futral**, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, said, "I think I can say without any reservation or contradiction that no man has ever affected the eternal destiny of as many people as this one country boy from North Carolina who heard the call of God to preach the Gospel. When he surrendered to that task, he never looked back and he never wavered."

see GRAHAM on p. 9 **GRAHAM**



## Steele Church damaged in lightning strike



The parsonage at Steele Church, Forest, burned to the ground in the pre-dawn hours of Feb. 7 after lightning struck the steeple atop the church's sanctuary next door and caused structural damage in that section of the church, said pastor Joey Smith. The parsonage was unoccupied at the time. Damage estimates were not available at printing deadline.

"How blessed was that no one was injured and that we have a Family Life Center in which to meet," said Smith.

(Photo by Bari A. Shirley)

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Standing for right

Many have been the accolades accorded Billy Graham since his death more than a week ago at age 99. Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, in his Directions commentary on page four of this issue describes Graham as the "Man of the Century." There are many indisputable facts to back up such a sweeping statement.

As the tributes continue to pour in and those many facts are highlighted, there's one significant aspect of Graham's life and ministry that doesn't need to be overlooked but often is because it happened so many years ago, in a much different America than we currently enjoy.

Billy Graham believed in and practiced human equality, because he had a clear understanding of human equality as God's love intended it with the sacrifice God made for all of us through His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Graham was already well established as a popular Christian evangelist when it was noted in newspapers of the day that he ordered rope lines removed that had been installed to ensure the races were segregated at his 1953 crusade in Chattanooga, TN. Refusing to begin the rally until the ropes were taken down did not endear him to supporters of the rigidly-enforced racial caste system of the time, but he stood his ground because he was convinced it was the right thing to do.

Those same supporters of the old system were no doubt aghast again when Graham had the audacity to not only install two black ministers on the planning committee for his 1957 New York City crusade, but also to invite a young black minister named Martin Luther King Jr., to preach. (Racial insensitivities have never been isolated to the South.) That crusade went into overtime, lasting 16 weeks and drawing nearly 2.5 million people.

Many years later, it was revealed that Graham had privately advised the organization founded by King to advance the cause of civil rights in America, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1960, the pair travelled together to the Tenth Baptist World Congress in Brazil. In 1963, Graham posted King's bail when he was arrested during King's so-called Birmingham campaign.

A deep friendship grew through their mutual agreement that all

people were equal before God. Although they came to differ on secular political issues of the day, King acknowledged Graham's unwavering commitment to ending racial segregation and Graham mourned King's assassination as the loss of a prophet.

By the time I personally heard Billy Graham preach to the standing-room-only crowd packed into Mississippi Memorial Stadium in Jackson in 1975, there was no question among the people there that anyone of any persuasion, any color, any height, any weight — anything — were welcome to walk down the steps of the stadium to make their professions of faith together.

"There is no scriptural basis for segregation," Graham once told a KKK member who confronted him with a twisted biblical interpretation of race relations. "The ground at the foot of the cross is level, and it touches my heart when I see whites standing shoulder to shoulder with blacks at the cross."

He was right then. He is right now. On the races, he will be right until the day Jesus returns.

Writing an otherwise cynical commentary about evangelical Christians in the wake of Graham's passing in the Feb. 27 issue of The Clarion Ledger newspaper in Jackson, USA Today columnist Tom Krattenmaker points out, "We can learn from his example that it's not only the content of our convictions and message that matters, but how we represent it and what we emphasize. Graham, like other great statesmen, demonstrated the importance of tone and gesture, of transcending us-versus-them tribalism, of treating others with decency even if they aren't likely to accept our message or advance our career."

"In these days of passionate debate, many of us are out on the metaphorical hustings and circuits arguing our cases and promoting our causes. Liberal or conservative, religious or not, we all seem to be evangelizing these days. If we can do it more like Billy Graham, we will make a lot fewer enemies in the process."

When it came to race relations — and so many other issues such as marital fidelity and alcohol abstinence — Billy Graham practiced what he preached. As Krattenmaker emphasized in his own way, we would all do well to do the same.

In loving memory of the Man of the Century, let's get started.

## Win them over

The world's population is on the move. Unprecedented numbers of men, women, and children are immigrating to countries beyond the boundaries of their ancestors. Many are doing what immigrants have always done: fleeing persecution, disease, and hardship.

Like all good mothers and fathers, they long for a better life for their children and grandchildren, and the United States is the destination of many of these peoples. In the milieu of harsh debate on immigration fomented by the news media, what should be the response of people of faith?

**First, the church should respond with compassion.** Displaying compassion does not mean you need to change your stance on immigration. We can separate our public policy positions concerning the larger geo-political issues from the persons and families living in our communities. The wider debate on immigration and the person standing in front of you require two very different responses. Compassion requires kindness and assistance toward those who are sojourners, exiles, and immigrants among us. We should be reminded that Jesus Christ Himself was an immigrant in Egypt after His birth.

**Secondly, people of faith should respond with loving communication.** Using language that is disparaging and hurtful to men, women, and children is never appropriate. In marriage, at work, and in political debate our word choice should always be loving. When I hear of someone who consistently vilipends anyone who speaks with an accent or has a shade to their skin tone, I wonder, "Do they not realize their Savior is in that group?"

**Thirdly, people of faith should respond with understanding.** Can you imagine how difficult it is to leave all that is familiar to you and move to a place where you have no friends or relatives and do not speak the language?

Recently, I met an immigrant from China. She works 10 hours a day, six days a week, yet she does not make enough money to care for her new baby. After giving birth to her first child, a little girl, the immigrant and her husband had to send the child to China to be cared for by grandparents because they did not make enough money to pay for childcare. I asked, "When



**Guest opinion**  
with Frankie J.  
Melton Jr.

will you see the baby again?" She said, "Maybe in three years."

I immediately thought of my own children and how devastating it would be to send them away for three years. Let us seek to understand the lives of the immigrants we are debating.

**Fourth, people of faith should respond relationally.** In a conversation with another immigrant last year, I learned that this immigrant's family has been living in the United States for 20 years, yet they did not have a single white American friend or relationship. Some who talk in church about how they want the world to "know Jesus" refuse to even speak or seek a relationship with the world living beside them.

Churches raise thousands of dollars to send missionaries to other countries to share the Gospel, yet the people giving the money will not do the simple act of getting to know their Muslim neighbor. Isn't that hypocrisy?

There is no sound more beautiful to a person than the sound of their own name. Yet, most immigrants develop a one- or two-syllable American name derived from their own because Americans are too disinterested to learn to pronounce their actual name.

Whatever your position on the larger debate about immigration, Christ demands that you speak kindly, reach out in love, learn to pronounce their names, invite them into your homes, and build a relationship with them.

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# Graham never forgot from whence he came

**MONTREAT, N.C. (BP)** — While Christian evangelist Billy Graham, who died Feb. 21 at the age of 99, was widely known for working across denominational lines, he also was more involved in his own denomination than many may realize.

Graham, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, spoke at 13 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meetings between 1951 and 1995, served as a trustee of two SBC entities and, including references to two institutions and a professorship named in his honor, has been mentioned in every SBC Annual since 1951.

He was nominated for SBC president in 1963 — though then-convention president Herschel Hobbs ruled Graham could not be considered for office that year because he was not an SBC messenger.

Graham "has an interesting variety of denominational ties," said Tom Johnston, a professor at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and author of *Examining Billy Graham's Theology of Evangelism*. "[but] among the Southern Baptists he found a home of warmth and welcome for his evangelistic gift."

Raised in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Graham became a Southern Baptist in 1937, receiving baptism at East Palatka (Fl.) Church along with new believers saved at a revival he had preached, Johnston told Baptist Press (BP).

Graham went on to hold membership at Curtis Church in Augusta, Ga.; First Church in Dallas for 55 years; and most recently First Church in Spartanburg, S.C., according to BP reports.

The first of 67 consecutive years Graham was named in the SBC Annuals — record books



**YOUNG PREACHER** — Then-Southern Baptist Convention President R.G. Lee (right), pastor of Bellevue Church in Memphis, introduced a youthful Billy Graham at the 1951 annual meeting of the convention in San Francisco. (Photo courtesy of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive)

published by the convention — came in 1951 when the evangelist addressed the SBC annual meeting in San Francisco on "the need for revival."

In a handful of those 67 years, the only mentions of Graham were the endowed chair and school of missions, evangelism, and ministry named for him at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. However, at the vast majority of their annual meetings Southern Baptists mentioned Graham in motions, resolutions, reports

of his crusades, sermons, and announcements of his service on boards and committees.

Graham told the SBC at its 1995 Atlanta meeting, "Many of the great Southern Baptist leaders encouraged me from the beginning of my ministry when they weren't even sure I was a Southern Baptist... I remember Dr. R.G. Lee and J.D. Gray and Jimmy Morgan and Herschel Hobbs and Duke McCall and W.A. Criswell and many others — I could go down the line — that

encouraged me from the very beginning," according to a transcript of his address.

His friendship with Hobbs was evident in 1970, when Graham made a surprise visit to an elderly woman in an Oklahoma City nursing home at Hobbs' request, BP reported.

Only two of Graham's addresses to the SBC — in 1979 and 1987 — came during the height of the convention's Conservative Resurgence and Graham made a point of not taking sides. He said in 1987, "I have determined that as an evangelist I do not want to get into a denominational dispute that in my mind is a combination of theological differences and personality clashes."

Two years earlier, however, Graham did find himself briefly in the middle of the conflict when a message he intended as a private communication with then-SBC President Charles Stanley was made public. Graham conveyed to Stanley that if he were a messenger, he would vote for Stanley's reelection — to the surprise of Stanley's moderate opponents.

Graham later clarified the reason for his vote would be that the convention customarily granted presidents a second one-year term.

A 1979 missions-themed sermon to the SBC culminated with more than 1,200 annual meeting attendees registering decisions to, as Graham put it in his message, "go where [God] wants you to go, and be what he wants you to be."

Graham served as a trustee of Southern Baptists' Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) in Richmond, Va., in the late 1950s and early 1960s, according to SBC Annuals, and was a trustee of the SBC Radio and Television Commission

in Ft. Worth in the late 1960s.

The convention elected Graham as one of its representatives on the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in 1962.

In 1972, Graham wrote to then-Foreign Mission Board executive secretary Baker James Cauthen that "no mission board in the world compares with the effectiveness of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Graham said in 1979 of the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, "No other denomination has devised a better plan for supporting the total missions program," BP reported at the time.

He was elected to preach the 1961 convention sermon but did not deliver that message because he was in the midst of a crusade in London and has been hospitalized with illness, according to SBC Annuals.

Southern Seminary is "the sole institution to receive authorization by Graham to use his name for its graduate school," according to a 2014 issue of Southern Seminary Magazine. Graham spoke at the inauguration of Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. in 1993.

Southwestern Seminary counts Graham as an honorary life member of the Southwestern Advisory Council, BP reported in 1997.

Graham's relationship with Southern Baptists' Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board) was evidenced by a visit to HMB offices in 1973 and an address at an HMB conference in 1985, BP reported.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville presented Graham with that agency's Distinguished Service Award in 1983 and 2007.

## LifeWay Research: Billy Graham recognized by millions

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — Almost 80 years after he began his ministry, Billy Graham continues to impact the faith of millions with nearly half of all Protestant churchgoers saying they have watched one of his sermons on television.

The internationally-known Southern Baptist evangelist died Feb. 21 at his home in the North Carolina mountains.

"Billy Graham was one of the greatest evangelists the Christian faith has ever known," said LifeWay Christian Resources President and CEO Thom S. Rainer. "Throughout his life, it was obvious he wanted the focus to be not on himself but on one thing: the cross of Jesus Christ."

A recent LifeWay Research survey found Graham's wide-ranging ministry influenced churchgoers through a variety of means. LifeWay Research is

the Nashville-based, evangelical research firm of LifeWay Christian Resources that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

Two-thirds of Protestant churchgoers had some contact with Graham's ministry, according to LifeWay Research:

- 48% have watched a Billy Graham sermon on television.

- 18% have listened to one of his sermons on the radio.

- 15% have read one of his books.

- 14% have read a Billy Graham newspaper column.

- 11% have attended a Billy Graham crusade.

- Eight percent have watched a Billy Graham sermon online.

"While Billy Graham became famous through stadium-filled crusades, he actually shared the good news of Jesus Christ with more people through TV, radio,

and print," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

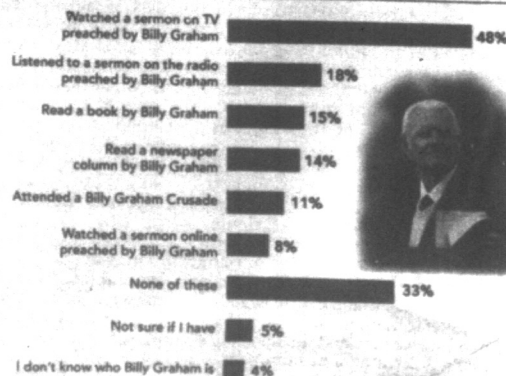
In a 2010 survey of Protestant pastors, LifeWay Research found Graham to be far and away the most influential living pastor at that time. Only four percent of churchgoers told LifeWay Research they "have no idea who Billy Graham is."

"Billy Graham was a gifted communicator in sharing the Gospel," McConnell said. "His greatest legacy may be the number of Christians he mobilized to join him in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Rainer, founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., prior to taking the helm of LifeWay Christian Resources, said Graham's legacy is secure because of the focus of his ministry.

### Billy Graham's influence

% of Protestant and nondenominational American churchgoers who say they have:



On February 21, I like millions around the globe was stopped in my tracks to think about the man of the century. A man who God so blessed that he lived from 1918-2018, and not only filled his life with years but filled his years with life. The death of Billy Graham circled the world in just moments. Anyone who had been touched by his life had to pause and think about the impact of a man who many had seen and heard thousands of times but maybe never met. I am fully aware that ten thousands of accolades will be written and spoken that will surpass any of my thoughts and recollections of Billy Graham, but I could not keep from just walking through the years and the touches in my life he brought that have and will continue to live in my heart.

The man of the century? Unquestionably. Just think over these nearly 100 years he lived how many great people have come and gone on the planet. People who truly were great and made a difference to their country or their kingdom or in their discipline of medicine or science. Think of all the things that happened over the 99 years of his life. World wars, depressions, atomic bombs, landings on the moon, but I think I can say without any reservation or contradiction that no man has ever affected the eternal destiny of as many people as this one country boy from North Carolina who heard the call of God to preach the Gospel. When he surrendered to that task, he never looked back and he never wavered. He kept on preaching.

For me personally the moments that I was in his presence — I am talking about in his presence along with thousands of others — were memorable occasions. The first time I ever heard him preach, I believe it was 1952, he was going to preach outside in the football stadium at Bailey Junior High School in Jackson. The little community where I lived planned to get one of the school buses and load it up with anybody and



## Man of the Century

everybody that would like to come and journey from up in Clay County all the way to Jackson to hear a man preach.

I honestly didn't understand all the hype about what we were doing, but I loaded up with the rest and we made the journey. I enjoyed sitting outside on a football field and listening to a guy preach, and what he was preaching I had already heard. I will never forget that he preached from Luke 15 on the prodigal son. He knew the story, and he told it right. When I say right, it was right from God and right to my heart. I remember that some of the people that were on the school bus with me made decisions for Christ that night, and I remember Billy Graham telling us and telling them that if you came with a group, they would wait on you. We did. It was a life-changing and eternity-changing moment for many from our church and community who had come that night.

Time passes so quickly. Billy Graham became such a renowned preacher across the land and around the world. I kept hearing of him, but that was the one and only time that I ever heard him in my growing up years until I was in high school. At the time, we lived in Hialeah, FL, in the Miami area and Billy Graham was going to be in the conven-

tion center over on Miami Beach for about a week. He came and preached and they asked him to stay longer and he did. I'm not sure how long he was there, but the week turned into two or three weeks. The thing I best remember was that I had several opportunities to load up my car, drive over to the crusade, and hear Billy Graham.

In the car with me were some of my buddies who together we played football and other sports. Some of them came to know Jesus during the crusade. It was at that meeting that just by chance I had the privilege of meeting Billy Graham, shaking hands with him along with my buddies who had come to hear him preach. I didn't think a whole lot about it then, but now decades later it's meaningful to me. The next time I had the privilege of going to hear him preach in person was at the beginning of the first event ever held at Cowboys Stadium in Irving, Texas. My wife Shirley and I went to the service. By design, the very first thing that would happen in Cowboys Stadium was going to be a worship service, an evangelistic service with Billy Graham preaching. We were there and while I saw the Cowboys play both on TV and in person at times, nothing surpassed

what took place there as people responded to Billy Graham and the message of Jesus that he preached.

Time passed and I was back in Mississippi preaching as pastor of a church when Billy Graham came back to Jackson in the 1970s. It was going to be at Memorial Stadium, and so while I lived in Gulfport, Shirley and I made plans to come one night and hear Billy Graham again. We drove to Jackson, got into Memorial Stadium, found us a seat, and sat through wind and rain as he preached. We watched as people responded to the call of Jesus to their heart and accepted Him as their Savior.

No way could I ever remember or evaluate all the times I heard his distinctive voice on the radio or saw him on TV when the crusades took place. While I may not be able to document every moment that I heard him or statement he made in an interview or sermon, the thing that has challenged me, blessed me, encouraged me, over and over again, is his staunch, unwavering commitment to the Lord Jesus to do what He had designed and desired for him to do.

I do not know if or when God will place His hand on someone else and raise them up to be not the next Billy Graham but a person who lives out that kind of devotion so that the world can clearly see the genuineness, not of Billy Graham, but of Jesus who makes a difference in our lives. All of us on a small scale have the opportunity to meet with the Lord and let the Lord work through us. While we have this great, giant example in one of His servants, the real test for all of us is that we allow Jesus to do that in us.

The accolades will come, but Billy Graham would point all of those accolades and all of those comments to Jesus who alone is the One who can save and who alone is the One who empowers us to live the abundant life.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Boko Haram pulls off another Nigeria kidnapping

**DAPCHI, Nigeria (BP)** — As many as 101 Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped Feb. 19 by Boko Haram terrorists are still missing after state government officials admitted to falsely announcing many of the girls' rescue.

In an attack reminiscent of the 2014 kidnapping of 276 girls from Chibok, Boko Haram raided the town of Dapchi in northern Nigeria late in the evening, forcing students of Government Girls Secondary School and other residents to flee into the surrounding bush, reported Reuters, the Associated Press (AP), and other news agencies.

On Feb. 21, the Yobe state government announced it had rescued 76 of the girls from their captors, causing parents to dance in the streets, Reuters reported. Anger flamed after Yobe Governor Ibrahim Gaidam told villagers a day later that the girls were still missing. Reuters reported Feb. 22.

"The government said yesterday the girls have been found, then the governor came today to say the soldiers are yet to find them," Reuters quoted Dapchi resident Ali Maidoya as saying. "Why did they lie to us before?"

A series of conflicting reports emanated from the kidnapping, with estimates of the missing girls ranging from 50 to 100 in reports from the Yobe police, government, and others. Most recently, Dapchi parents compiled a list of 101 missing girls, the AP reported Feb. 22.

The attack came four years after Boko Haram enraged the international community by kidnapping 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, located about 170 miles southeast of Dapchi. While many of the Chibok girls have been recovered or released, about 100 are believed still missing.

In January, Boko Haram released a video claiming to show about 10 of the Chibok girls, speaking in the Muslim extremist group's native Hausa lan-

guage, who reportedly said they would never leave the terrorists. Sahara TV posted the video Jan. 15, saying it was obtained from journalist Ahmad Salkida who specializes in reporting on terrorist activity occurring where the girls were first taken.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari claimed in December 2016 he had technically defeated Boko Haram, weakening the group so much that it would only be able to carry out isolated suicide bombings.

Boko Haram, which began attacking first Christians and then others in its attempts to establish Sharia law in Nigeria, has killed an estimated 20,000 people and displaced 2 million in Nigeria and neighboring nations since 2009.

The terrorists have claimed allegiance to the Islamic State and have been accused of increasingly killing Christian farmers in raids since 2017 in cooperation with or under the guise of Fulani herdsmen.



**IN CAPTIVITY** — Boko Haram terrorists kidnapped as many as 101 schoolgirls from Dapchi, Nigeria Feb. 19, four years after taking 276 schoolgirls from Chibok. This screen capture was taken from a video Boko Haram released in January claiming to show a handful of the Chibok girls that remain missing. (Screen capture from Sahara TV video)





There are many issues where we must balance Grace and Government. Though they seem to conflict and even contradict each other, they must be balanced. As true science and the Bible can be harmonized, Grace and Government can be harmonized.

Both Grace and Government are of God. Paul said in Romans 13:1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (KJV). God instituted Government for the sake of society, just as He instituted marriage between a man and a woman, just as He instituted the church to be the Body of Christ in that local community. GOD, GRACE, AND GOVERNMENT GO together.

But there are decisions we make about Grace and Government that are complicated. We want to make those decisions from a Biblical Worldview. Here are some examples.

If we take the Great Commission seriously, we will get the Gospel to every human being by whatever means possible. We will gladly use multiple languages here or abroad to share the Gospel. On the other hand, the story of Babel (Genesis 11) clearly teaches

## Grace and Government

that multiple languages are an obstacle in Government. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:8, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (KJV). On the battlefield, everyone needs to be on the same page and using one language for commands. Under Grace, we are multi-lingual, but Government needs a primary language.

Under Grace, we are to turn the other cheek and return good for evil. But Government must protect and defend its citizens. Does a Christian go to war for his Government? (We have a son, Kaleb, who as a Second Lieutenant, will be deployed to the Middle East with the 15<sup>th</sup> in June.)

I have visited on many occasions the home of one of my heroes and my father's hero—Sergeant York. He started out as a conscientious objector from "Jintown," Tennessee. On leave from the Army, he went home and with a Bible and an American history book, he went up on a mountain, and like Moses, came down with a decision. He went to the European front

and became the most decorated soldier of WWI. Under Grace, he had gotten "converted" just before the war, but under Government he "converted" a bunch of Germans single-handedly. After the war he married "Gracie."

Under Grace, we should be compassionate to refugees and immigrants. Even Melachi 3:5 (KJV) says we should not "turn aside the stranger from his right." But we are a nation of laws. A Government such as ours cannot embrace "open borders." We must enforce the laws that exist and protect our national identity. Under Grace, or on a mission trip overseas, we leave "nationalism" at home, but in Government we pursue "exceptionalism" with no apology to anyone.

In Government, we must protect Second Amendment rights—or only the Government and the bad guys will have guns. The American Revolution would not have succeeded if the colonies had had the same "gun control" laws that exist in many states. We don't need tyranny or anarchy. Grace says to Peter—put up your sword—but Govern-

ment allows us the freedom to protect ourselves. Churches and ministries are struggling to balance Grace and Government.

When we vote in Government, we are not calling a pastor. We are electing a public official. Therein lies a big difference many Baptists need to recognize. We want good men and women in Government, but when you need brain surgery, you want the best doctors available, not the best man or minister. Grace is spiritual—Government is practical.

In Government, we must be tolerant of laws we dislike. But under Grace, we do not condone judicial or legislative positions that violate our Biblical Worldview.

Jesus expressed a proper tension between Grace and Government. In Matthew 22:21 (KJV), he said, "...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." We balance Grace and Government.

*Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by email at kdigby@christianaction.com.*

## Texas Baptist board removes CBF giving channel

DALLAS (BP and local reports)

— The decision by the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) to stop forwarding churches' contributions to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) because of the breakaway group's recent change in policy regarding the hiring of LGBT employees reflects a commitment to the biblical view of marriage, say the convention's president and executive director.

"I am very grateful for the consistent, steady way in which the BGCT has held to God's Word," said BGCT President Danny Reeves, pastor of First Church, Corsicana, according to a news release from the convention. "We lovingly say to all people the truth that marriage is to be between one man and one woman."

The BGCT Executive Board adopted a recommendation Feb. 20 to "remove CBF as a giving option from the BGCT gift remittance form and to encourage churches to send their CBF gifts directly to the CBF national office," according to Texas' Baptist Standard news journal.

The move came less than two weeks after the CBF Governing Board voted to replace its former prohibition of hiring homosexual and transgender employees with a policy that opened



**CBF DROPPED** — Dennis Young (at podium), chairman of the Executive Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Dallas and pastor of Missouri City Church in Missouri City, presides over a Feb. 20 meeting at which the board voted to stop forwarding funds from churches to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. (BP photo courtesy of BGCT)

some positions to "Christians who identify as LGBT."

Initially, the BGCT responded Feb. 12 with a statement reaffirming the convention's belief that "the Bible teaches that any sexual relationship outside the bounds of a marriage between a man and woman is sin."

The BGCT Executive Board's subsequent decision to stop for-

warding gifts to the CBF received only one negative vote and was not accompanied by any discussion during the board's general session, the Standard reported.

BGCT executive director David Herdage said following the vote, "Texas Baptists have consistently held to biblical truth on marriage and human sexual-ity while at the same time lov-

ing and caring for everyone," according to the BGCT release.

Previously, the BGCT enabled each church to designate the percentage of its gifts that would be used for BGCT missions and ministries and the percentage for one of three worldwide partners: the Southern Baptist Convention, 3GCT Worldwide, or the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The BGCT recommends that congregations designate 79% of their cooperative gifts for BGCT ministries and 21% for a worldwide partner, but the 79-21 split is not mandatory.

The CBF now will be removed from among the convention's worldwide partners.

The CBF was founded in 1991 as a fellowship of churches that objected to the ideology and methods of the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence.

In 2017, 349 churches in cooperation with the BGCT gave approximately \$1.1 million to the CBF through Texas Baptist channels — \$776,981 as a cooperative giving option and \$315,862 to CBF Global Missions, the Standard reported.

CBF executive coordinator Suzil Paynter, former director of the BGCT Christian Life Commission, said the Execu-

tive Board's decision "is deeply disappointing for how it changes the cooperative method by which Texas Baptist churches support CBF," according to a CBF news release.

At least two other SBC partner conventions forward churches' contributions to CBF: the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) and the District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC). The BGAV's Executive Board is scheduled to meet Feb. 26.

According to a Feb. 20 action of the SBC Executive Committee, the SBC will "no longer recognize the DCBC as a Baptist body authorized to receive and disburse Cooperative Program and other SBC contributions" if the DC convention does not secure by May 20 "the removal of any churches from its fellowship that have demonstrated a faith or practice affirming, approving or endorsing homosexual behavior."

The BGCT is one of two state conventions in Texas that partner with the SBC. The other Texas convention, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, does not forward gifts from churches to the CBF.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board does not forward gifts to the CBF.

## College News



The nationally ranked **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** table tennis team defeated Mississippi State to win the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association's Dixie divisional tournament Feb. 10. The team will next compete at Texas Wesleyan University at regionals Feb. 24 - 25. Shown is the table tennis team.

## Staff Changes



**WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC**, has called John Mark Jarrett as their new minister of students and missions. He is shown with his wife Ashley and their children, Oliver and Adelyn.

## Just for the Record

### In other Church News:

► **Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth**, is hosting a Bible Prophecy Conference with speaker Robert Jeffress, pastor, First Church, Dallas, Tex., March 22 - 23. Thursday, evening meal, 6 p.m.; teaching sessions, 7 and 8:15 p.m.; Lovelace Family, special music. Friday, breakfast, 9 a.m.; Steve Byrd, special music, 10 a.m.; closing session, 10:15 a.m. Kara Blackard, pastor.



**MT. OLIVE CHURCH, BENTON-TIPPAH ASSOCIATION**, honored its military men preparing to be deployed. Shown are Jacob Stricklin, pastor Terry Ray Vuncannon, and Devin Wallace.



**FOREST CHURCH, FOREST**, honored Dianne Walker upon her retirement from the music ministry after 54 years.



The GA's of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, worked on their GA journals and decorated them. The church members provided cereal boxes for the girls to make them with.



**NEW SIGHT CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, held a deacon ordination Jan. 14. Shown are Robert Foster, pastor Jeff Cupit, and Richard Maxwell.



Lightning struck the parsonage of **STEELE CHURCH, FOREST**, Feb. 7, causing heavy damage to the church itself. The church is worshipping in their "new" temporary church in the Family Life building.

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# SBC Executive Committee tackles major issues

**NASHVILLE (BP and local reports)** — The District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC) has 90 days to "secure the removal of any churches from its fellowship that have demonstrated a faith or practice affirming, approving, or endorsing homosexual behavior," according to a Feb. 20 recommendation adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC).

If such churches remain in friendly cooperation with the DCBC after that period, the DCBC will lose its authorization "to receive and disburse Cooperative Program and other SBC contributions," the EC stated during its Feb. 19-20 meeting in Nashville.

The SBC's relationship with the DCBC came up for discussion at the EC meeting because of a Washington, D.C., church's Jan. 2017 decision to call a legally-married lesbian couple as co-pastors. Efforts over the past year by EC leaders to help the DCBC deal with Calvary Church

in a biblical manner proved "unfruitful," the EC stated.

Calvary Church voted in 2012 to cease cooperation with the SBC but has remained a member of the DCBC. Calvary Church, like DCBC, other state conventions, and the SBC, is an autonomous body that can choose with which groups to associate or not associate.

Acting on behalf of the SBC, the EC gave the D.C. convention until May 20 to disaffiliate Calvary Church, secure the congregation's voluntary withdrawal from DCBC fellowship, or help lead the church to repentance. If none of those steps materializes, the DCBC will immediately lose its authorization to receive and disburse CP funds.

According to the latest records available, seven of the 149 churches in cooperation with the DCBC give to SBC causes. Some of that giving comes through the DCBC, and some funds are forwarded directly to the EC by churches.

EC chairman Stephen Rummage told Baptist Press (BP) the committee's action "was a decision that there's no doubt we needed to make, but it's a decision we made with great sadness."

Rummage is senior pastor at Bell Shoals Church in Brandon, Fla., and also currently serves as president of the Florida Baptist Convention.

Initially, the EC's Bylaws Workgroup and Administrative Committee were presented with a recommendation to ask messengers at this summer's SBC annual meeting in Dallas to end the convention's CP relationship with the DCBC.

The Bylaws Workgroup approved the recommendation without opposition. However, the Administrative Committee after extensive discussion defeated the recommendation with no dissenting votes and forwarded to the full EC the substitute proposal that eventually was adopted.

Joseph Lyles, pastor of Fort Foote Church in Fort Washington, Md., which cooperates with the DCBC, was present at the workgroup and committee meetings. He confirmed to BP that he asked the EC for 90 additional days to secure Calvary Church's repentance or removal from fellowship.

The EC "was kind and considerate to try to bring about redemptive restoration. We're trying to extend the olive branch, and I think it was received. So I was encouraged," Lyles said.

Lyles, a former president of the National African American Fellowship of the SBC, asked Southern Baptists to pray for a "peaceful resolution," adding he will speak with DCBC executive director Robert Cochran, the DCBC Board of Directors, and "possibly" Calvary Church.

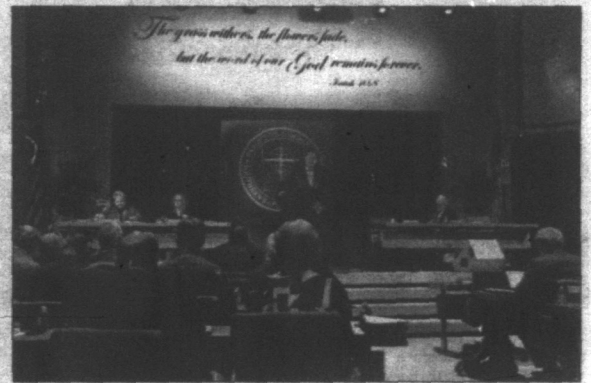
EC President Frank S. Page expressed prayer and hope "the DCBC will do that which is right in the eyes of the Lord." While the EC doesn't know what will happen, Page said, "we were asked by one of their leading pastors to give them more time to deal with this, and we have decided to do so in prayerful hopefulness."

Cochran released to BP a statement which he said was delivered to the Administrative Committee. According to the statement, the Apostle John "warned" and "encouraged" the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, but he "never cut ties to any of these seven congregations, despite their shortcomings."

Cochran added, "Calvary's actions do not reflect on the D.C. Baptist Convention or any other convention in any way."

## Missions merger

The EC declined with no dissenting votes the creation a



**EXEC. COMM. CONVENES** — Stephen Rummage, chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee (EC) and senior pastor of Bell Shoals Church in Brandon, Fla., presides over the committee's Feb. 19-20 meeting in Nashville. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

committee to study the feasibility of combining the SBC's two mission boards, opting instead to encourage the boards' expressed desire to continue cooperating with one another.

The feasibility of merging the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga., and the International Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Va., has been repeatedly studied, the EC said, and a merger was not found to be workable.

Instead, both boards were twice restructured after studies ending in 1994 and 2010, resulting in a combined reduction of 700 staff members since the latest restructuring, the EC said.

NAMB and IMB enjoy a productive cooperative relationship, the presidents of both entities told BP.

"I am grateful to report that the working relationship between IMB and NAMB today is strong, and we want that partnership to only increase in the days ahead," IMB President David Platt said. "At the same time, we believe that significant differences exist between IMB and NAMB in such a way that neither organization believes it is wise to merge together."

NAMB President Kevin Ezell expressed a similar sentiment. "We are blessed with a great partnership with IMB and we will continue to look for ways that our two entities can work together and minimize redundancy," Ezell told BP.

"With all of the downsizing both NAMB and IMB have had in recent years, we believe continued cooperation, rather than merger, will be much more beneficial to Southern Baptists."

## 2019 CP budget

The EC also approved a 2018-2019 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget of \$194,000,000 for recommendation to the SBC. The pro-

posed budget maintains current allocations to the convention's ministries, including 50.4% of receipts to the IMB and 22.8% to NAMB, for a total of 73.2% for world missions ministries.

The convention's six seminaries will receive 22.2%. The seminary enrollment formula for funding will yield: Gateway Seminary, two percent; Midwestern Seminary, 3.2%; New Orleans Seminary, 3.6%; Southeastern Seminary, 3.9%; Southern Seminary, 5.3%; Southwestern Seminary, 3.9%; and 24% to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, a ministry overseen by the seminary presidents. (Cumulative numbers may not match the sum of individual seminary percentages due to rounding.)

The budget proposal designates 1.6% to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. The SBC Operating Budget, the only CP-funded facilitating ministry, encompassing SBC annual meeting costs and the work of the Executive Committee, would receive three percent of the budget.

Under the formula for distributing any overage in the CP Allocation Budget, 53.4% would be allocated to the IMB and zero percent to the Executive Committee and SBC Operating Budget, with the balance distributed to the other entities according to the CP Allocation Budget.

Additionally, the EC was notified that Page will contract with C. Barry McCarty to serve as chief parliamentarian for this year's annual meeting in Dallas.

The next EC meeting will be held June 11 in Dallas.

Mississippi Baptists currently serving on the SBC Executive Committee include David Hamilton of Pontotoc, whose term expires in 2018; Bobby Kirk of Doddsville, whose term expires in 2020; and Jimmie Rose Strahan of Cleveland, whose term expires in 2021.

## MS POSITIONS

**CASON BAPTIST CHURCH IN NETTLETON, MS** IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Interested candidates can email resumes to casonbaptistms@gmail.com

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**TROY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH—PONTOTOC, MS** IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER & A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please email resumes to tbcncwhter@tcfstfast.com

**UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MS** IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Unity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 158, Moselle, MS 39459, or you may email them to ubc.resume@yahoo.com. Either should be designed as attention: Pastor Search Committee.

**SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR — BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH.** Located at Meridian, MS in the Wynot community of Southern Lauderdale County. Please email resume to office@wynotbethany.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church, 4475 Ponds Road, Meridian, MS 39301.

**TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH.** Send Resumes to: 824 China Grove Rd. Jayess, MS 39441 or brudale54@bellsouth.net

**EASTSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH IN PELAHATCHIE IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A WORKSHOP LEADER/MUSIC DIRECTOR.** For more information or to express interest in the position, please contact Cynthia Graham at (601) 594-1979.

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## OBITUARIES

**Kathryn Jean Bearden, 85**, retired Baptist student union director and resident of McComb, died Feb. 10 at McComb Nursing and Rehab Center in McComb from complications of Alzheimer's Disease. She was born June 6, 1932, in McComb to Herbert O. and Lovie Cain Bearden. She graduated from McComb High School in McComb, Mississippi College in Clinton, and New Orleans Seminary in New Orleans. Bearden served as Baptist student union director from 1957-71 at Gilroy School of Nursing in Jackson, and from 1971-96 as Baptist student union director at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. She retired to McComb in 1996. An only child, she was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by special caregivers of over 30 years, Victor and Sherry Walsh. Funeral services were held Feb. 13 at Hartman-Jones Funeral Home in McComb, with burial in Hollywood Cemetery in McComb.



BEARDEN

**Jimmy Daniel Davis, 76**, of Brandon, retired Mississippi Baptist minister, died Feb. 14. He was born April 28, 1941, to Charles E. Davis and Grace Boyd Davis. He was a chaplain at Mississippi State Hospital in Whitfield. Davis was preceded in death by his parents, son, and brother. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Bonnie Sowell Davis; daughters, Jennifer Davis Morgan (Kenneth) and Gelaina Davis Allen (Robert); brothers, Billy Davis (Linda) and Ronald Davis; sisters, Zella Grace Bunton and Betty Ann Davis Blaine (Scottie); and three grandchildren. Funeral services were held Feb. 18 at Ott and Lee Funeral Home in Brandon, with the interment at Canton Cemetery in Canton. Ott and Lee Funeral Home in Brandon was in charge of arrangements.



DAVIS

**Charles Monroe Hargett, 78**, retired pastor of Crossway Church (formerly Bowmar Avenue Church), Vicksburg, and a resident of Brandon, died Jan. 17. He was a native of El Dorado, Ar., whose teaching ministry began as a member of Bowmar Avenue Church. He was a civil engineering graduate of Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, and held a masters of science degree in structural engineering from Purdue University in West Lafayette, In. Little was a registered professional engineer and an ordained Southern Baptist minister and evangelist. He was preceded in death by his wife of 44 years, Janice "Honey" Elia Hargett; parents, Lonnie and Pink Hargett; and brother, Paul Hargett. Little is survived by two daughters, Karen Hargett and Lisa Noble (Gary); son Chuck Hargett; sister Jimmie Hardee; five grandchildren; four great grandchildren; and special caregiver Janice Penquite. Private graveside services were held Jan. 20 at Rest Haven Memorial Gardens in El Dorado, Ar.



HARGETT

**James Perry Little, Jr., 70**, retired minister of music at First Church, Laurel, died Jan. 27 of complications of Parkinson's Disease. He was born July 17, 1947 in Grenada to the late James Perry Little, Sr. and Violet Mitchell Little. He spent his childhood in Grenada and later moved with his family to Pascagoula. Little attended Mississippi College in Clinton, the University of Mobile in Mobile, AL, and New Orleans Seminary in New Orleans, all of which prepared him for his 48-year career as a minister of music in churches in Alabama and Mississippi. Little is survived by his wife of over 45 years, Sandra Howard Little of Moselle; two daughters, Kaysha Little Clark (Hal) of Spanish Fort, AL, and Olivia Little Walker (Michael) of



LITTLE

Moselle; a brother, Larry Steve Little of Vancleave; and six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a sister, Marjorie Clea Little. Funeral services were held Jan. 30 at First Church, Laurel, with burial in the cemetery of Shelton Church, Moselle. Ellisville Funeral Home in Ellisville was in charge of arrangements.

**Malcolm Reese "Mac" Massey, 87**, long time Mississippi Baptist pastor and resident of Raymond, died Jan. 11. He was born on March 23, 1930, to Clarence and Ruth Leggett Massey in Dentville. Massey served as a Southern Baptist pastor for 60 years in Mississippi and Louisiana, and was a retired Lt. colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve in which he served for 24 years. He was a member of the Lion's Club, Shriners, and Freemasons. He was preceded in death by his wife, Georgia Polk Massey; his parents; and sister, Wanda Higdon. He is survived by a daughter, Vicki Daniels (Jon); three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held Jan. 16 at First Church, Brookhaven, with interment in Riverwood Memorial Park in Brookhaven. Riverwood Family Funeral Services in Brookhaven was in charge of arrangements.



MASSEY

**Charles Edward Nestor, 83**, retired pastor and businessman, died Jan. 20 after a brief illness. He was born March 31, 1934, in Nestorville, W.V., to Edra Gainer and Teddy Clyde Nestor. He earned his bachelor's degree in history from West Virginia University in Morgantown. A U.S. Army veteran, he was southeast division manager for Agrico Chemical Company when in 1969 entered Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, where he earned master of divinity and PhD in theology degrees while serving congregations in Proctor and Santo, both in Texas. In 1975 he received a call from First Church, Coldwater, and in 1978 from First Church, Bruce, where he served until his retirement in 2000. He then went to work for Shelby Systems as a program consultant, assisting churches with their software programs. He retired again in 2015 to Grand Junction, Tn. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Clara; daughter, Marsha Cannon (Tim); son, Chuck Nestor (Karan Ann); and four grandchildren. A celebration of life was held Jan. 22 at Parker Memorial Funeral Home Chapel in Bruce, followed later that day by funeral services at Grand Junction Church in Tennessee. He was laid to rest at Mount Zion Cemetery in Nestorville, W.V. on January 24. Parker Memorial Funeral Homes of Bruce was in charge of arrangements.



NESTOR

**Howard Denman Smith, 81**, longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor and resident of Brookhaven, died Jan. 16. He was born in Brookhaven on May 28, 1936, to Denman W. Smith and Ina Mae Smith. He was a graduate of Loyd Star High School in Wesson; Mississippi College in Clinton; and New Orleans Seminary in New Orleans, with a masters of divinity degree. He spent 62 years in ministry, including pastorates in Mississippi and Louisiana. He also served as an associational missions director and as a member of the Louisiana Baptist Convention Board. Smith is survived by his wife, Betty Lou Smith; son, Bert Smith of Natchez; daughter, Salena Greenlee (Mickey) of Brookhaven; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Jewel Smith; and sister, Linda McKee. Funeral services were Jan. 20 at Friendship Church, Brookhaven, with interment in the church cemetery. Riverwood Family Funeral Services in Brookhaven was in charge of arrangements.



SMITH

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

FCPF US FCAX GCPDF HARSOGG IUFC

FCB KAXFC FCO DATE VOGXG, PRE

GCPDF WODUOJO UR FCURO COPTF

FCPF MAE CPFC TPUGOE CUK STAK

FCO EOPE, FCAX GCPDF WO GPJOE

TAKPRG FOR:RURO

Clue:  $X = U$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 3:16

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## GRAHAM

cont. from p. 1

■ **Frank S. Page**, president of the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, said, "Along with countless others, I mourn today for the passing of Billy Graham. As I came to Christ as a young man out of a non-Christian home, he became a mentor to me from afar. I admired his preaching, his life, and his integrity. I told him so, years ago when I got to meet with him. Heaven is a richer place today."

"For three-quarters of a century, he has been a faithful ambassador for Christ, seeking to reconcile men and women to God through faith in Jesus Christ. He has borne witness for Christ without distinction, sharing the Gospel with the world's most powerful leaders and

with the oppressed, urging the wealthiest and the most impoverished alike to find their hope in Christ alone."

■ **Ronnie Floyd**, pastor of multi-campus Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and two-term immediate past president of the SBC, said, "I am overcome with emotion when I think of Billy Graham and his influence on all of Christianity. He was a giant for God, a one-of-a-kind, once-in-a-generation prophet of God's truth and grace. He called everyone, young and old and even boys and girls, to get up from their chairs and give their lives to Christ and they poured out by the thousands... I pray we may never forget his legacy and his unrelenting passion for Jesus, and may we follow his footsteps in calling people to repentance in Christ."

■ **Kevin Ezell**, president of Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga., said, "Only eternity is expansive enough to measure the impact Billy Graham had on our world. I will be forever grateful for the way he kept believers focused on the priority of proclaiming Jesus. I am thankful and grateful for the impact he made on my life and that of millions of others."

■ **Paige Patterson**, president of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth and former two-term SBC president, said, "The eyes of a North Carolina farm boy sparkled as never before this morning when Billy Graham entered heaven. After nearly 100 years spent largely in an effort to 'rescue the perishing and care for the dying,' the world's evangelist was called home to a prophet's reward."

"Never accused of the hoarding of wealth or of sexual misconduct, his careful practices of conduct place him in a category of a man whose life was a proclamation of Christ as well as His message. His faithfulness to the proclamation of God's plan of redemption — undergirded by his initiatives on racial justice and his concern for the lost — set the standard for all who would attempt to preach the riches of the Gospel. His allegiance to sacred Scripture was legendary. Never did he allow doubt to shake his confidence in God's Word."

■ **R. Albert Mohler Jr.**, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said, "An epic era of evangelical history has come to an end. Billy Graham was not only a titanic figure in evangelicalism, but in world history and perhaps represents the last of a kind. He dominated 20th-century American evangelicalism and remained a major figure on the world stage throughout most of the 20th century in a way that we can envision no evangelical leader in our times. He was a man of

deep conviction whose passionate heart was for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

■ **Thom S. Rainer**, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC and founding dean of Southern Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry, said, "[Graham] will forever be revered as one of the greatest evangelists the Christian faith has ever known. In a day and time when Mr. Graham could have easily commanded the attention of millions for his own gain, he chose to live a private, humble life. Throughout his life, it was obvious he wanted the focus to be not on himself but on one thing: the cross of Jesus Christ."

■ **Russell Moore**, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, said, "We are fortunate to have lived in the era of Billy Graham. He was perhaps the greatest Southern Baptist in history, turning the world upside down with the Gospel. He was never ashamed to confront a brave new world with the old-time Gospel."

Combining the power of a 'the Bible says' authority with the compassion of a 'Just as I Am' invitation, he projected the mission of Christ Jesus, full of grace and truth. Behind Dr. Graham's stately North Carolina accent, millions of people heard another voice, a northern Galilean voice calling 'Come, follow Me.' As we grieve the loss of Billy Graham, let's thank God that in this man's life we were able to see the Gospel that is, still and forever, the power of God unto salvation."

■ **Jerry A. Johnson**, president of National Religious Broadcasters and a former Southern Baptist pastor, said, "The world has lost a great man, but those in heaven are surely rejoicing in the homecoming of this good and faithful servant. Only God knows how many are there with him because of his

ministry and how many more there will be. It seems trite to say he was a giant among men, but no one could doubt the truth of this statement."

For more than eight decades, Billy Graham faithfully obeyed Christ's command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature as our Lord commanded. Billy Graham loved the Lord with all of his heart and demonstrated this through his ministry. He was a trailblazer in the use of radio, television, film and other communications platforms to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ... Billy Graham was and will remain a shining example for us all."

■ **Chuck Kelley**, president of New Orleans Seminary, said on Twitter: "With news of the passing of evangelist Billy Graham, I am rejoicing over his magnificent life of faithful, powerful, fruitful Gospel preaching & careful, intentional, consistent Gospel living!"

■ **Danny Alkin**, president of Southeastern Seminary, said on Twitter: "I'm saddened to learn of Dr. @BillyGraham's passing. Yet rejoice that he is now in the arms of King Jesus, and for the legacy of evangelism he leaves."

■ **Bryant Wright**, senior pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Church and a former two-term SBC president, said on Twitter: "Isn't it a fitting tribute to Billy Graham's life that on every major news outlet that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being shared over and over. Oh Lord, may Jesus and the Gospel be the focus as we live each day and when any of us are called to heaven one day!"

■ **Jack Graham**, senior pastor of Dallas-area Prestonwood Church and a former two-term SBC president, said on Twitter: "Billy Graham never wavered and preached Jesus faithfully without apology. The cross and resurrection and the public call to decision was the focus of every sermon."

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall:** Revival, Mar. 4 - 7; Services, Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed. 7 p.m.; Bill Britt, speaker; Noah Bowlin, music; Ted Bowlin, pastor.

► **Jim Futral, Executive Direc-**

**tor-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, recently preached a four-day revival at New Prospect Church, Oxford.** Pastor Buster Wilson said, "The Lord moved greatly with increasing crowds each night."

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Sean A. Milner, Executive Director**  
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Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 16-31

### MEMORIALS

Dennis (Rusty) McClelland  
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Sanders  
Marion McManus  
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen A. McManus  
James McMillian  
Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Walsh  
Mrs. Lila Lee McRight  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
David Milner  
Mr. & Mrs. Greg Sirmon, Olivia & Cooper  
Mrs. Dorothy Montgomery  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack S. McRee  
Lounelle Morris  
Mrs. Mary Margaret Tatum  
Mr. J. T. Morrison  
Mr. & Mrs. Judd A. Morrison  
James Morton  
Ms. Barbara Curlee  
Laverne Mote  
Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Walsh  
Hurstun Newcomb Jr.  
Harold & Lisa Newcomb  
Teresa Nowworthy  
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Sanders  
Betty Owens  
Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ward  
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest M. Parsons  
Mr. & Mrs. E. C. Parsons  
Mr. Mike Parsons  
Mr. & Mrs. E. C. Parsons  
Mr. Robert Boyd Patterson  
Mrs. Linda Perkins  
Mr. Plinio Pivon  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel A. Smith  
Darlene Paxton  
Mr. & Mrs. L. J. Garner  
Scotty Paxton  
Mr. & Mrs. L. J. Garner  
Tommy Paxton  
Mr. & Mrs. L. J. Garner  
Dean Pearce  
Ms. Barbara Curlee

Robbie Beall Pettrey  
Mr. George F. Pettrey  
Mr. Carroll Polk  
Mrs. Sandra Polk  
Ms. Elizabeth Prime  
Adult III SSC, North Columbia BC  
Mr. David Pylon  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack S. McRee  
Dr. Charles Ray  
Mrs. Linda Perkins  
Mrs. Rhoades  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Van Norman  
Mrs. Cesa Richardson  
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan  
Mr. Billy Riggins  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill G. Lambert  
Christopher Rives  
Mrs. Nancy W. Wilbanks  
Ms. Bernice Rochell  
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Ms. Mavis Rochelle  
Mr. & Mrs. James Paul Robinson  
Mr. Charles "Chuck" Roth  
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Carla Osborne  
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Dr. Rebecca Sue Wilkie  
Stanley Sharp Jr.  
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Harold Shell  
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Dr. Rebecca Sue Wilkie  
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Dr. Rebecca Sue Wilkie  
Mr. Kelly Wilson  
Mr. & Mrs. Arnold L. Chavers  
Mrs. Frances Wynne  
Mrs. Edith M. Aldridge

JANUARY

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Owen Burgo  
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Calvary Baptist Adult Choir  
Mrs. Dianne May  
Felix J. Dugas IV  
Mr. Felix J. Dugas, III  
Ms. Catherine Ferguson  
Mrs. Cheryl L. Denon  
George Hays  
Adult III SSC, Carrollton BC  
Rev. & Mrs. Tommy Jones  
Mrs. Helen E. Smiley  
Mr. Sean A. Milner  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. McDade, Jr.

New Hope Quilters  
Mrs. Dianne Bond  
Dr. Jani Purvis  
KDMC Radiology Dept  
Dr. Bill Sones Jr.  
KDMC Radiology Dept  
Mr. Ben Stigler  
Senatobia HS Office Staff  
Mrs. Chrystelle Thames  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Meaher  
Sheriff Randy Tucker  
Ms. Laura J. Leathers  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve (Brenda) Ulmer  
Mrs. Jimmie Palmer  
John O. Watson  
Adult III SSC, Carrollton BC

JANUARY

### MEMORIALS

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Mr. & Mrs. Byron Dean  
Mya Grace Alexander  
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Willie Alford  
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Mr. Ted Buckley  
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Mr. & Mrs. Steve Warren  
Ms. Susan Crews

Stanton BC  
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Willie Frazier Jr.  
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Mrs. Ruth K. Nevels

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).



## United in Christ • 1 Corinthians 1:10-25

All churches have problems; some have significant ones. Let's go ahead and recognize that elephant in the room with an eye roll and head nod. But thankfully, a study such as the one for this quarter can, with prayerful determination, give us insights and tools to address issues that can hamper church health.

The Corinthian church has been given a bad rap, and understandably so. Members displayed signs of spiritual immaturity including disunity, pride, immoral lifestyles, gluttony at the Lord's Supper table, and misuse of spiritual gifts. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul uses words of love, warning, and instruction to correct these and other faults. But the epistles are not just about the congregation's failings. Interspersed with the apostle's dealings with the less-than-godly actions of this band of believers are some grand themes: the assurance of the resurrection, victory in the face of suffering and weakness, new life in Christ, and the call to experience and show His supernatural love. We'll unpack these and more in the weeks ahead.

Today's lesson's focus is one that is of supreme importance to the Lord: unity. Paul begins his letter by praising God for several positive attributes he's seen evidenced in this congregation he had planted several years earlier. However, in verse 10 of our focal

passage, Paul begins a message of admonishment. He has heard there were quarrels and divisions (vs. 10 and 11), and he appeals to them to "agree with one another" and be "perfectly united in mind and thought" (NIV). Here, Paul was calling for agreement on fundamental doctrinal issues and goals, not on items of little consequence, such as the color of the church's new carpet or which Bible translation the pastor should use.

So what were these members of the local body of Christ doing that stirred up dissension? Verse 12 reveals some were choosing to show allegiance to certain leaders (Paul, Apollos and Cephas), while others would go the one-upmanship route by saying, "I follow Christ". Incredulously, Paul showed the foolishness of these misplaced loyalties by asking, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (vs. 13). When we give honor or allegiance that rightfully belongs only to Jesus Christ, we are displaying misplaced loyalties.

There is, however, one distinct (and appropriate) line of division, and that can be seen in the massive, rough-hewn beam that, reaching heavenward, suspended the Son of God on Calvary. This line of division is clearly portrayed by the placing of two criminals on either side of this spotless Lamb; one rejected Jesus, shouting curses at him, and the other was promised to be in the Lord's presence in paradise that very day (Luke 23:40-43). Yes, "the message of the cross is foolishness to

those who are perishing" (vs 18), Paul affirms, but those who embrace the gospel find it provides the avenue "to save those who believe" (vs. 21). In Paul's day, people were seeking purpose in life through other ways than the way of the cross. They saw this symbol of God's salvation as "a stumbling block" and "foolishness" (vs. 22). So it is today. Only those who embrace this blood-stained treasure will experience "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (vs. 24).

So how can we apply this lesson? Ephesians 4:3 encourages us to "make

every effort" to maintain unity with fellow members. In Colossians 3:12-15, Paul lists virtues to adopt, tying them with a cord of love, "which binds them all together in perfect unity" (vs. 14). Philippians 2:3 calls us to be "like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose", and verses 3-4 of that chapter show we do this by considering the interests of others instead of putting ourselves first. Sometimes, this may involve teamwork. In Acts 6:1-7, we see trouble brewing when the Grecian widows "were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food" (vs. 1). A solution was found that pleased the church, resulting in the congregation's rapid expansion.

Not only should we seek unity in our local church, but, as much as possible, with other evangelical groups. In Mark 9:39-40, the disciples saw someone outside their group casting out demons in Jesus' name. When they shared this with their master, the Lord told them not to stop the man, adding that "whoever is not against us is for us" (vs. 40). Denominations striving toward a common goal — kingdom advancement — can share a common bond.

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Explore the Bible  
with Ann Maniscalco

## Our Provider • Genesis 22:1-14

The heart of this entire lesson is found in verse 14 — the name Jehovah-Jireh. God will provide!

God as provider is shown in the familiar yet no less riveting account of Abraham and Isaac. This test — which, frankly, never really resonated with me until I had children of my own — revealed the kind of God Abraham was to follow. Abraham is to be severely tested.

This test by God on Abraham was not designed to trip him up. God doesn't play those kind of games. Rather, God wanted to develop Abraham's character. Abraham had been singled out by God for a very specific and significant task. This was not a time for Abraham to ask God about His own morality. Instead, this event was engineered by God to deepen Abraham's capacity to obey.

One analogy to what Abraham was about to experience might be the refiner's fire, a metaphor common in scripture. As fire refines ore to extract precious metals, so Abraham was about to experience some extreme "heat." In our own lives, God refines us through challenging circumstances. We have no reason to believe we are exempt.

It's worth noting, too, Abraham's relationship with Isaac. Verse 2 reveals

this. Scripture doesn't give the "how" of the conversation; some commentators think this was delivered by an angel (or as the Christian Standard Bible states, "the angel of the Lord," v. 11). In verse 2 we see God point out that Isaac is Abraham's only son, the son whom he loves, and that Abraham is to sacrifice him as a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah.

Set against the backdrop of Abraham's total love for Isaac, we also see his total obedience in verses 3 and 4. We see Abraham saddling a donkey and taking two young men and Isaac to Mt. Moriah. Abraham carried with the party all he would need for the sacrifice. At the end of the journey Abraham would have to give up something precious to himself. What do we cherish most? Obedience isn't easy, nor does it come naturally. Abraham grimly set himself to the task he'd been called to — but don't miss the word "we'll" in verse 5. Abraham seems

to indicate that he had every intention of returning with Isaac and rejoining the party.

Isaac is savvy enough to recognize that something is up. He poignantly asks in verse 7, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (CSV). Understand that human sacrifice was and is a horrible sin, then and now.

Perhaps God wanted Abraham to

know for himself the full extent of that love. In this story, Abraham learns about his own personal commitment to obey God — and, tellingly, learns about God's ability to provide.

Picture Abraham with his arm raised, knife in hand, about to, as the CSV states, "slaughter his son." Hear the angel voice from heaven cry "do not lay a hand on the boy or do any-

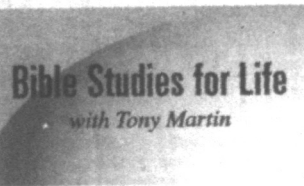
thing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me." Of course God knew the final outcome, but Abraham learned much about himself.

God provided the ram for the sacrifice, v. 13. This was a substitute for Isaac. Now, God has provided a like substitute for us in His son, Jesus Christ. While God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son; God did not stop the sacrifice of His own Son.

Because of his obedience, Abraham was blessed. He was promised children, grandchildren, and future generations; he was promised victory over his enemies; and he would be a blessing to the nations (vv. 17 — 18).

What is our response? First, you can expect God to test you. It is part of His ongoing work to conform us to the image of Christ. Second, He can and will call on you to give up "something," and it might be good things — even things He Himself gave you. Third, in supernatural and unfathomable ways, He provides the strength for us to say "yes" when all else leads you to say "no." It is a matter of seeking His best and His alone that gives us His success.

Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.



Bible Studies for Life  
with Tony Martin



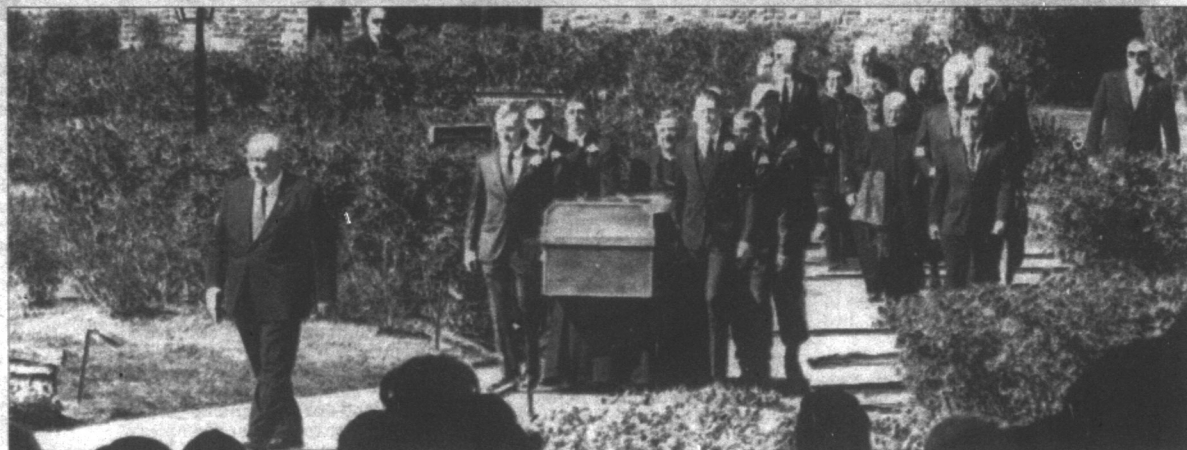
## BRIEFS

### HUCKABEE OUSTED DUE TO DISLIKED OPINIONS

NASHVILLE (BP) — Former Arkansas governor and Southern Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee resigned March 1 from the Country Music Association (CMA) Foundation's board after a number of influential members of the country music industry complained about his longstanding opposition to same sex marriage, his stances on other hot button issues, and his involvement with the National Rifle Association, reported The Tennessean newspaper in Nashville. "I genuinely regret that some in the industry were so outraged by my appointment that they bullied the CMA and the Foundation with economic threats and vowed to withhold support for the programs for students if I remained," Huckabee wrote, adding he hopes "the music and entertainment industry will become more tolerant and inclusive and recognize that a true love for kids having access to the arts is more important than a dislike for someone or a group of people because of who they are or what they believe."

### ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING BILL PASSES HOUSE

WASHINGTON (BP) — Sex advertising websites and their users would face penalties for sex trafficking under a bill passed Feb. 27 by the U.S. House of Representatives, amending an earlier law that had shielded such offenders. Similar legislation is pending in the U.S. Senate. A bipartisan group of 388 legislators passed H.R. 1865, termed the "Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017," to amend Section 230 of the Communications Act of 1934. Section 230 had limited the legal liability of interactive computer service providers or users for content they publish that was created by others, according to a summary at Congress.gov. The House bill would establish monetary fines and up to 10 years' imprisonment for abusers.



**LAI'D TO REST** — Billy Graham's grandsons served as pallbearers for his March 3 funeral at the Billy Graham Library near Charlotte, N.C. The Southern Baptist evangelist's eight-decade career ended when he died Feb. 21 in his North Carolina home and was buried March 3 at the library that bears his name. (BP photo)

## Billy Graham eulogized, laid to rest

### Gospel invitation caps evangelist's funeral

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP and local reports) — Famed Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham's funeral March 3 in a revival tent at the foot of a 40-foot glass cross was punctuated by the same theme that characterized his 80-



GRAHAM

year ministry: a call to trust Christ as Lord and Savior.

"If this were your funeral, would you be in Heaven? Are you sure?" said the late evangelist's son Franklin Graham, head of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

and founder of aid organization Samaritan's Purse.

Billy Graham, 99, who walked with royalty and advised 11 U.S. presidents while preaching the Gospel around the world, died Feb. 21 at his home in North Carolina.

Delivering the funeral sermon to a crowd of some 2,300 invited guests at the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., — including U.S. Donald President Trump and U.S. Vice President Pence — Franklin Graham said "If you're not sure, there would be no better time than at

Billy Graham's funeral to settle this once and for all."

Billy Graham's funeral capped more than a week of memorial activities, including laying in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda Feb. 28-March 1.

The funeral service in Charlotte featured tributes from Graham's five children, music by Christian recording artists Michael W. Smith, the Gaither Vocal Band among others, and an ethnically diverse array of speakers from across the world.

see GRAHAM on p. 6

## Noms sought for 2019 MBCB posts

Jackson, MS (Special) — The 2018 Committee on Nominations approved by the messengers of the 182nd Mississippi Baptist Convention in October of last year will soon begin reviewing trustee/board member positions on the boards and commissions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) to serve in 2019.

Robby Rikard, committee chairman and pastor of First Church, Wiggins, has said there are a limited number of vacancies to be filled on the following boards and commissions:

- Baptist Children's Village
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (Memphis)
- Board of Ministerial Education
- Education Commission



- Historical Commission
- Blue Mountain College
- Mississippi College
- William Carey University
- Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, Inc.
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
- Mississippi Baptist Foundation

The Committee on Nominations will work with the heads of the institutions and agencies to bring a list of nominees to be approved by the messengers of the 183rd annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention on October 30-31, 2018, at First Church, Jackson.

For nomination forms, telephone Executive Administration (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. A nomination form can also be downloaded by visiting [tinyurl.com/99nom](http://tinyurl.com/99nom) and scrolling to the bottom of the page.

Completed forms should be mailed to the Committee on Nominations, c/o Dr. Jim Futral, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530, at the above address to be received no later than May 1.

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### He deserves it

**T**he earthly remains of the great evangelist Billy Graham are now resting beside his beloved wife Ruth at the Billy Graham Library near Charlotte, N.C. One would have to have been in a cave for the past two weeks to have missed the news that he died Feb. 21 at the age of 99.

It is estimated that Graham preached the Good News before than more 2.2 billion people around the globe. It is inestimable the number of people saved by his inspired words. His steadfast commitment to being a Christian exemplar in every way put him in the presence of kings and queens and presidents and dictators. He treated the powerful no differently than the common people he met because, as he made clear many times, he believed all people were equal at the foot of the cross. He was (is) right — and he practiced what he preached.

Graham was not flawless. In that regard, he was like us. There was the embarrassing gaffe on The White House lawn after his meeting with U.S. President Harry S. Truman. His surreptitiously-recorded comments about Jews on U.S. President Richard Nixon's infamous Oval Office taping system did not serve him well.

Still, he was a man after God's heart whose sincere love for the Heavenly Father's only begotten Son was on display for all to see, 24/7/365. In the words of Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Director-Treasurer Jim Futral, he was the "Man of the Century."

That's what makes it so difficult to read the manifold criticisms of Billy Graham after his death.

Laura Duca, a columnist for Teen Vogue magazine, invited Graham to "have fun in hell, [expletive deleted]," adding that "Respecting the dead" only applies to people who weren't evil pieces of [expletive deleted] while they were living."

Duca is only one reason parents should keep their daughters away from the hedonistic Teen Vogue, which also offers explicit instructions on how young girls can hang on to their boyfriends through sexual gratification.

Noted social critic and columnist George Will (a self-avowed atheist) wrote in the Washington Post newspaper that Graham was a mixture of vanity and naivete. Of Graham's remarks on the Jewish race in Nixon's presence, Will posited, "One can reasonably acquit Graham of anti-Semitism only by convicting him of toadying."

Will also didn't appreciate Graham laying in honor in the Rotunda of the national Capitol in Washington, D.C. Another column by Will in National Review magazine was titled, "Billy Graham: Neither Prophet nor Theologian."

Will's kindred at Americans United for Separation of Church and State weighed in, too. Referencing the Capitol Rotunda event, the organization said, "We respect the fact that many people revere Billy Graham because he brought them deep spiritual meaning and inspiration..." but "Such a high government honor for someone solely for their work spreading an interpretation of one faith offends the spirit of our First Amendment's guarantee that government will not take actions that endorse or promote religion."

"Billy Graham believed fervently in Christianity and people listened to him," said the officially atheist group Freedom from Religion, in a letter of protest sent to U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "But that is not worthy of praise or a spot in the U.S. Capitol, however temporary. Graham in his own way sought to undo the only sure way to guarantee freedom of religion: a government free from religion. Graham is on the wrong side of history. You will be, too, if you authorize this unearned honor."

Everyone is constitutionally entitled to their opinion, even if it's wrong. That truism is hard to accept in a case like this when people strive to take honor away from a man who deserves the honors he has been given in death.

Yes, Billy Graham is worthy of honor and praise. Let's give Billy Graham every earthly honor he deserves, and leave his greatest reward to be bestowed by God.

## Get it right, will ya?

**I** suspect some readers may be disappointed that I've elected to pass on reviewing the Oscar telecast this year. Sorry. I prefer watching a movie over viewing Hollywood congratulate itself for the umpteenth time this awards season. I did, however, want to express my unabashed love for the cinema.

Movies combine the essence of all the other art forms, and films have been used to both edify and entertain. Shows like the Academy Awards come and go, with audiences soon forgetting who won. What remains is the work itself and we movie buffs are blessed to live in a time when we can watch restored Blu-ray editions of films from decades past that still entertain, inform, or nourish the spirit.

The Bible speaks of how men will wander away from the truth when they turn their backs on God (2 Tim. 4:3). Sure enough, movies frequently take us down a fantastical path that leads to nowhere because their makers all too often disavow the existence of our Creator.

Ah, but there are artists who do acknowledge the Creator. God bless them. America's Heart and Soul (2004), Friendly Persuasion (1956), Inside Out (2015), and For All Mankind (1989) quickly come to mind as examples of films that amuse and uplift.

However, The Tree of Life (2011) was my choice this year for viewing on the night of the Academy Awards. Directed by the inventive Terrence Malick (Days of Heaven; The Thin Red Line), it's a bit too artsy for some but I felt it was appropriate for the night Hollywood pats itself on the back while telling off the Republican Party.

The Tree of Life is a thought-provoking hymn to life, an impressionistic story of a Midwestern family coping with a death, embittered relationships, and haunting questions concerning God and the afterlife. It won the Palme d'Or, the highest award given at the Cannes Film Festival.

With a tip of the hat to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), this visual and viscerally emotional feast is sparked by exquisite imagery that is imaginative and profound, intimate and epic. What's more, The



**Guest opinion**  
with Phil Boatwright

Tree of Life fearlessly examines ethereal questions with a spirituality that is neither pious nor prejudiced.

The film suggests that we become aware of spiritual matters and rely on faith when the conundrums of the day overwhelm us. Like any artist attempting profundity, Malick provides an atmosphere and sets a mood suitable for examining our own beliefs, thus giving the viewer a renewed desire to share them with others. At least that's what happens to me upon each viewing.

Theologians may counter with the perspective that the auteur's lofty resonance is in actuality little more than an incoherent introspection. However, detractors cannot deny the film's ability to cause discussion.

At first you may ask, "What was that all about?" but as you ponder the film's visuals and its intent, you will come to the joyous revelation that you've just had an insightful motion picture experience. It's a film where CGI effects are used to support the theme and performance, not dominate them, and the filmmaker does more than awe us with his narrative — he taps into our subconscious and delves into spiritual and life-altering subjects. He has used a freeform arthouse film to suggest the omniscient stature of God.

The Tree of Life was nominated in the Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Cinematography categories. It won none.

*An entertainment critic, Boatwright resides in Kansas City, Mo., and is the author of MOVIES: The Good, the Bad, and the Really, Really Bad, available on Amazon.com. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.*

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# The Kendricks: One good movie leads to others

ALBANY, Ga. (BP) — Evangelicals were introduced to a new level of faith-based filmmaking 15 years ago when brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick released *Flywheel*, a \$20,000-budget film using church members as the cast and production crew to convey biblical truth.

"We're just amazed at what the Lord's done with it," Alex Kendrick told Baptist Press (BP).

The brothers served on the staff of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., where native Mississippian Michael Catt is senior pastor.

The brothers went on to produce the movies *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, and *War Room*. They're still astonished at how God used their skills and tools in *Flywheel* to change countless lives.

*Flywheel* tells the fictional story of a dishonest used car salesman who comes to know Christ and changes the way he operates his business, risking financial ruin to uphold his integrity.

The brothers grew up in the 1980s experimenting with editing between their camcorder and VCR to tell silly stories around the neighborhood, Alex Kendrick recounted. "We'd do dangerous stunts — falling over fences and wrecking bicycles or jumping down into a ditch or something."

"We enjoyed that, but we slowly developed a knack for learning how to do basic shooting and editing and storytelling. As we grew older, and the Lord began calling us into ministry, that love for telling stories was always with us."

When they arrived at Sherwood Church in the early 2000s, Alex Kendrick could see a movie in his head but it was "so much harder to pull off a two-hour feature-length story than we ever imagined."

"My first concept was not surprisingly something with a lot of action, maybe some special effects," Alex Kendrick told BP. "It included a plot where a character asks God to reveal Himself to him and the Lord takes him back in time and he sees a piece of the biblical time when Jesus was with His disciples, and he sees Jesus at a distance doing some of His miracles, and then he comes forward in time as if in a coma."

"The more I prayed about it, the more the Lord clearly said, 'Alex, this is your idea, not My idea.' Plus, I don't think it would have been shootable at the stage we were at. We did not have film degrees. We did not have prior professional experience shooting anything other than our little videos."

Catt told the brothers they could attempt a movie if it didn't hinder their staff responsibilities, and God made it clear to Kendrick that the movie should be about lordship.

"At the time, I was buying a used minivan for my growing family, and when I went through



**MOVIE MAKERS** — Alex and Stephen Kendrick, two brothers from Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., used their interest in storytelling through film to produce the movie *Flywheel* some 15 years ago, conveying biblical truth about integrity through a plot based around a used car salesman. (BP photo courtesy of Kendrick Brothers)



**PROLIFIC ARTISTS** — After *Flywheel*, Alex and Stephen Kendrick went on to produce *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, and *War Room*. They're still astonished at how God used their skills and tools to change countless lives with their first offering. (BP photo courtesy of Kendrick Brothers)

that process of buying the minivan at the lot [where] we ended up shooting the movie, that's when it hit me that that could be the setting for a story about lordship, so that developed into the *Flywheel* plot, which was at a shootable level, meaning there were no special effects, there were no explosions or car chase scenes or anything like that."

The 2003 film, named for an auto engine key component, was mostly dramatic with the story captivating audiences more than the film quality.

"I remember He humbled me so quickly because the movie I

saw in my mind was way better than what I was looking at on the monitor," Alex Kendrick said. "I used to criticize cheesy Christian movies, thinking I could do so much better, until I tried to make one and I learned just how hard it is to do it effectively but we did bathe that process in prayer, and the Lord — in spite of our meager skill level — still used it, and it sold over a million DVDs worldwide in numerous languages."

*Flywheel* holds a special place in the Kendrick brothers' hearts, he said, because God brought more fruit from it than they

## FLYWHEEL'S SUCCESS

The movie *Flywheel* tells the fictional story of a dishonest used car salesman who comes to know Christ and changes the way he operates his business, risking financial ruin to uphold his integrity. The film had a budget of only \$20,000 and used church members as the cast and production crew, but went on to sell more than one million DVDs worldwide. (BP photo courtesy of Kendrick Brothers)

imagined. Used car lots across the nation give away the movie when someone bought a car because that's the standard of integrity for which they want to be known, Alex Kendrick said.

A company in Dalton, Ga., the carpet capital of the world, has a group of businessmen who get together and call themselves the *Flywheel* group because they challenge each other to operate at that level of integrity and lordship, he said.

Christian television networks still air *Flywheel*, which surprises Alex Kendrick because the production quality is not in today's high-definition technical standard.

"It's standard definition, and there's nothing visually impressive about *Flywheel* at all. If anything, I think the story grabs

people's hearts, and of course there's truth in the movie but it's even hard for us to watch it because it was shot with a standard definition camera at 30 frames a second," Alex Kendrick said.

Christian entertainment critic Phil Boatwright, whose columns are carried by Baptist Press and frequently appear in *The Baptist Record* (see page two of this issue), said there's always a spirit of sincerity in the Kendrick brothers' productions.

"One gets the impression this is their ministry, while at the same time understanding the No. 1 rule of cinematic storytelling — story must come first," Boatwright said.

Michael Foust, a movie critic who hosts a family life podcast for Heirloom Audio, said the impact the Kendrick brothers have had on faith-based films cannot be overstated.

"They've been the Lewis and Clark of the genre. No, they weren't the first to make faith movies, but they did it better than anyone who came before and Hollywood noticed. They were trailblazers who made first-class movies on shoestring budgets."

"Even more impressive, the Kendricks have continued to improve on their craft. *War Room* was better than *Courageous*, which was better than *Fireproof*, which was better than *Facing the Giants*, which was better than *Flywheel*."

"Remember, *War Room* was the No. 1 movie at the box office in its second weekend in 2015. That's an accomplishment that many well-known Hollywood directors haven't achieved. The Kendricks also have been models of humility, giving all credit to God while working to help raise up the next generation of filmmakers."

Beginning with *Fireproof*, the Kendrick brothers employed a few young Christian filmmakers who went on to make their own films. The Erwin brothers left the *Courageous* set and made *October Baby*, *Mom's Night Out*, and *I Can Only Imagine*.

For *War Room*, the Kendrick brothers enlisted 20 Christian college film students who were studying the craft.

Alex and Stephen Kendrick were the executive producers for *Like Arrows*, a Family Life production about biblical parenting set for wide release in theaters May 1 and 3. The brothers plan to shoot their next film, with an undisclosed theme, this spring and summer.

"The power of a story has always impacted culture," Alex Kendrick told BP. "...Jesus told parables as the ramp-up to share truth. That's the way we view our movies. We want each of our films to draw the viewer to a closer walk with the Lord."

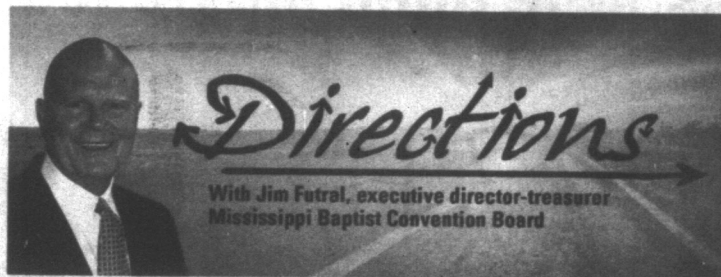


**H**ow many of you have thought about how often your day doesn't go the way you planned it? It may not be any earth-shaking thing that you've got in mind, and it may not be something that urgent that has to be done that day, but as you start your day or think about the day before, you probably have in mind several things that you need to accomplish. Maybe some by noon and some in the afternoon, but how many times does that get altered? You may be one of those methodical people who outlines the whole day and you have five things that you need to get done that morning and seven things that afternoon.

For me, I do have a series of things that I want to accomplish or at least address during the day. They may be meetings. They may be readings. They may be places I need to speak or people I with whom I need to talk, but almost without exception if I think I'm going to get them done one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, they end up something like four, eight, one, three, and several left over.

There are some people that just really, really become a nervous wreck because life doesn't fit in their systematic plan. They genuinely get upset by it. They live in perpetual anxiety and heartburn. Yet the fact is we do not know what a day holds. I so often think of James in his little book toward the end of the Bible where he said, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:13-14). The truth is, we don't.

For that reason, James goes on to say in the fourth chapter, verse 15, "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'" In all truthfulness, it doesn't always come out the way we think it might. We trust God. We try to live somewhat flexible and trust the Lord to lead us because it is so easy to get upset, frustrated, ill-tempered, bad attitude, because life isn't working out



## Play the Ball Where the Monkey Throws It

like we thought that it would or should or could. It rarely does, so get in line with the Lord and let Him help you when life isn't working out like you thought it would or intruding events or shocking changes bring you to a point where you just don't know what to do with life because it is so topsy-turvy.

A friend of mine was telling me the other day about an experience that he had while on a mission trip in Africa, a country where they were had a large city that was proud of its golf course on the edge of the metropolitan area. Though he was not a golfer, some of the folks there wanted to go play golf one afternoon. Just to have some fellowship with them, he went.

He got out on the golf course and saw something that was really strange. There were signs all over the golf course that said, "Play the Ball Where the Monkey Throws It." He asked what that was about, and later on he would find out and see what it meant. The problem was that the golf course had areas around it that had monkeys everywhere. Just regular, wild monkeys that lived in that

area. The monkeys would come out on the golf course and they were fascinated with the little white ball that came flying through the air and landed near them or even went on the green and the monkeys would run out there and grab the golf ball and throw it somewhere.

The people who kept up the golf course had tried several things to get rid of the monkeys. They had even built a fence. I don't know what kind of fence it was, but they built a fence around the golf course trying to keep the monkeys out. I suppose they didn't know that a monkey could climb on a fence, but it didn't work. They had also tried noisemakers to scare the monkeys off, but it had no affect at all. Many of the people who regularly played golf there got upset because where they hit their ball is not where the ball was when they had to hit the second and third time. The monkeys would run out there, get the ball, throw it to the other side of the fairway, or off the golf course.

After trying one thing after another to keep the monkeys away, they just conceded that they built the golf course in the monkeys' domain and they changed

the golfing rules to accommodate what happens on the golf course. So the sign said, "Play the Ball Where the Monkey Throws It." That's what they did. It's hard enough to play golf when you just are playing against the elements or the wind or the frustrations of just trying to hit the thing fairly straight, but when you've got to deal with the monkey population, it's even more difficult. The people who played the course that day as every day would just begin with the understanding that they would have to hit their ball wherever the monkey throws it.

The fact is that for nearly all of us, life is somewhat like that. Every one of us is going down the fairway of life and suddenly realize that something has affected the steps ahead and the next shot in life. Sure enough, the monkeys have been on the course. There are some amazing things that can take place when God changes the course in your life each day. Things that can either frustrate you or bless you. Things that can change the twists and turns of your road of life and take you down a path that is filled with new sights and new joys and new people and new opportunities. Some of you may never see those things. Some of you may never come to enjoy the monkeys of life throwing your ball around on the course, but you would choose rather to just be frustrated about it, angry about it, upset because somebody, some thing, some monkey pitched your golf ball off in a ditch and you can't get over it.

James reminds us that the will of God is not always fully known when the sun comes up every morning and what you plan for the day is not in God's plan and purposes for you. Things get shifted around and about mid-morning you realize, yep the monkeys in life have been at work again in my daily routine. Go with the flow. Go with God in the midst of what He has in store for you. Watch carefully and you may see a bright and shining blessing just ahead.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mccb.org](mailto:directions@mccb.org).

## Minor removed for 'transition' despite objections

**CINCINNATI, Ohio (BP)** — An Ohio couple lost permanent custody Feb. 16 of their teenage daughter because they didn't want her to undergo sex-change treatment.

Cincinnati-area Juvenile Court Judge Sylvia Hendon removed the girl from her parents' custody and turned her over to her maternal grandparents who support the 17-year-old's desire to identify as a male. The teen moved in with her grandparents early last year.

The names of the girl, her parents, and her grandparents are sealed by court order.

The girl was first hospitalized in 2016 and diagnosed with gender dysphoria, depression, and an anxiety disorder. The gender clinic at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center recommended hormone therapy treatment but the parents refused, saying they did not think it was in their child's best interest and instead wanted to pursue Christian counseling to

"get to the underlying causes" of their daughter's desire to switch genders, according to The Cincinnati Enquirer.

In November 2016, the girl contacted a crisis chat service and reported suicidal thoughts because of her parents' opposition to a gender change. Hamilton County Job and Family Services took temporary custody of the girl and placed her with her grandparents.

During the closing arguments in Hamilton County Juvenile Court at the end of January, the medical team from the hospital's gender clinic said removing the girl from the custody of her parents was "a possible life-or-death situation" due to the severity of her depression, according to CNN.

The medical team said the girl has been improving since living with her grandparents due to therapy, and that hormone treatment was the only option to decrease the risk of suicide.

"What we want to do in the

coming months around May is plan for a high school graduation," said Jeffrey Cutcher, the grandparents' attorney. "We don't want to be planning for a funeral."

The county prosecutor and attorneys for the girl and the grandparents contended that anything other than full openness to hormone therapy and gender transition would deny the girl appropriate medical care.

A pediatrician featured in CNN's coverage of the case compared it to parents refusing to give their asthmatic child an inhaler, but that is unscientific according to Michelle Cretella, the president of the American College of Pediatricians.

"A child suffering from gender dysphoria has a fixed belief contrary to physical reality. This is a delusion," Cretella told The Christian Post, noting there is no long-term evidence to show that encouraging a child's gender transition prevents suicide, and "it is more likely that what-

"Since there are no long-term studies regarding the use of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones in young children and teens, this entire enterprise is, by definition, an experiment upon a minor — and a dangerous one at that, given the lifelong, permanent side effects."

**Michelle Cretella**

**American College of Pediatricians president**

ever has caused the child's depression and suicidal thoughts is also triggering the gender dysphoria."

Cretella added, "Since there are no long-term studies regarding the use of puberty block-

ers and cross-sex hormones in young children and teens, this entire enterprise is, by definition, an experiment upon a minor — and a dangerous one at that, given the lifelong, permanent side effects."

A report released last year pointed to the significant, long-term physical and psychological risks associated with hormone treatment in minors, including the inability to transition back, permanent sterilization, heart disease, and cancer.

Before Friday's decision, Cretella said a ruling in favor of the "ideologically-driven gender clinic" would be a tremendous hit to "the ability of all parents to protect their children of any age from all aspects of this social and medical experiment."

*Editor's note: The article first appeared at WORLD Digital, a division of WORLD Magazine (worldmag.com) based in Asheville, N.C. Used by permission. Edited for style.*

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

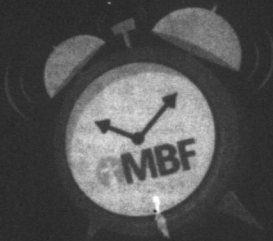
# HOUSE TOPS

Matthew 10:27 NAS

March 8, 2018

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

## IT'S 2018!



Time to apply for scholarships with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation!

Our policy, deadline, and applications have changed. Please visit our website to review the 2018 policy and submit an application before April 30.

Call us at 601.292.3210 or visit [www.ms baptist foundation.org](http://www.ms baptist foundation.org) for more info.

## PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

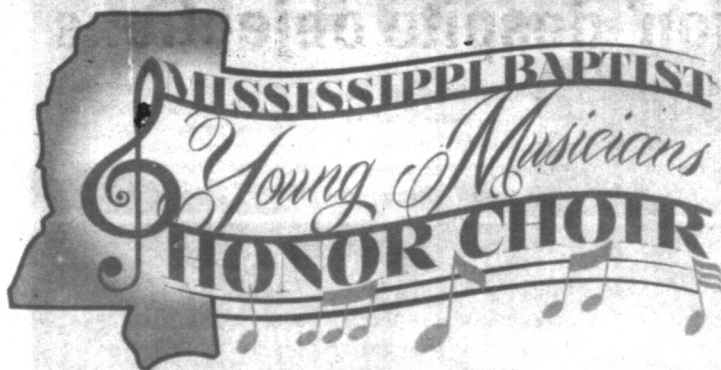
### BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS – SAVE THE DATE

P/LD is excited to host Bivocational Pastors/Wives Dialogue Dinners in 2018! The purpose is to discuss new strategies for resourcing Bivo pastors throughout our state based on 2017 survey results.

Join us at one of the following locations:

- March 8 – Meridian • April 19 – Grenada
- April 5 – Hattiesburg • April 26 – Gulfport
- April 12 – Flowood

For additional information, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at [vclary@mbcb.org](mailto:vclary@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3305.



## Young Musicians Honor Choir CONCERT

Saturday, April 21, 2018  
6:30 p.m.

Brandon Baptist Church

Contact the Church Music Department at 601-292-3267 for more information.

## 2018 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST SPEAKERS' TOURNAMENT

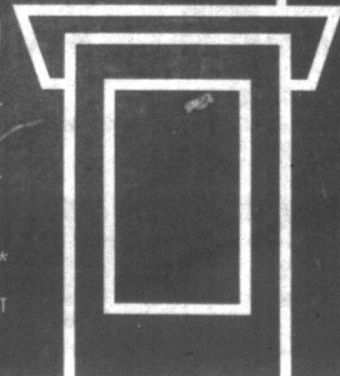
BRANDON BAPTIST CHURCH  
BRANDON

SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018

REGISTRATION: 10:00 A.M.

\*\*SPEECHES DUE TUESDAY, APRIL 3\*\*

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[TPRESSON@MBCB.ORG](mailto:TPRESSON@MBCB.ORG) OR 601-292-3284  
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(Summer Music & Arts Camp for Kids)

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Blue Mountain College  
Blue Mountain, MS

SMACK camp is designed for kids who have completed 3rd-6th grades.

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# DAUNTLESS

Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Registration begins February 1, 2018  
[www.mbcb.org/student-connect-camp](http://www.mbcb.org/student-connect-camp)

Session 1: June 4-7

Session 2: June 7-10

Session 3: June 12-15

Please contact Tony Martin at 601-292-3217 or [tmartin@mbcb.org](mailto:tmartin@mbcb.org) for further information.

# 2018 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST PREACHING

## CONFERENCE

### APRIL 9-11, 2018

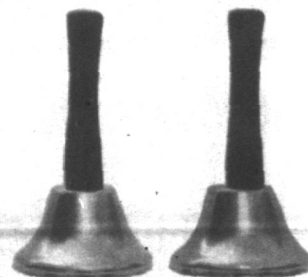
Register today at [tinyurl.com/preach2018](http://tinyurl.com/preach2018) and contact Pastor Leadership Development at [velarys@mbcb.org](mailto:velarys@mbcb.org) for more information.

## Mississippi Baptist Handbell Festival

### April 13-14, 2018

### First Baptist Church, Raymond

Contact the Church Music Department at [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org) or 601.292.3267 for more information.



### STATE BIBLE DRILLS

**Weekday Drills**  
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Saturday Drill**  
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 17  
FBC, McComb  
Emmanuel BC, Grenada

Thursday, April 19  
Harrisburg BC, Tupelo  
Carterville BC, Petal

Saturday, April 21  
Crossgates BC, Brandon  
Poplar Springs Dr,  
Meridian

Tuesday, April 24  
FBC, Madison  
Hillcrest BC, New Albany

Thursday, April 26  
FBC, Starkville  
North Oxford BC, Oxford

Saturday, April 28  
FBC, Clinton  
(Selection Tournament)

Visit <http://www.mbcb.org/bible-drill/> for more details and resources.

Contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at [tpresson@mbcb.org](mailto:tpresson@mbcb.org) for more info.



## 2018 VBS Kickoff

March 23-24, 2018

Garaywa Camp & Conference Center

Friday, March 23

7:00 p.m. Worship Rally | 8:15 p.m. Breakout Sessions

Saturday, March 24

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions & Expo

Visit [www.mbcb.org](http://www.mbcb.org) to register, or contact the Sunday School/Small Groups Department at [elindigrin@mbcb.org](mailto:elindigrin@mbcb.org) for more info.



Pray this day for...

March 9 - March 22, 2018

*"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."*  
Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Pray for: **Millard Jones**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Susan Jones**, missionary ministering to East Asian Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert Mooney**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Pascock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Eugenia Putnam**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Tracy Putnam**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **John & Deborah Royals**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through regional office support & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Jonathan & Bethany Sharp**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & community outreach/encounter.

Pray for: **George & Geraldine Smith**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.



Miss Addie Grace Putnam  
5/16/00  
Parents: Tracey & Genie  
European Peoples

Miss Alana  
5/18/11  
Parents: J & M  
Restricted

Miss Anna Claire  
5/23/01  
Parents: J & P  
Restricted

Mr. J.D.  
5/24/10  
Parents: D & L  
Restricted

Mr. Reed R.  
5/26/14  
Parents: J & K  
Restricted

Mr. Cruz White  
5/26/10  
Parents: David & Regina  
American Peoples

Mr. C.S.  
5/29/03  
Parents: S & M  
Global Resource Team

To Be Sent April 24, 2018, by the WMU Office

PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!  
NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.  
FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.  
Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.



**MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST  
SENIOR ADULT CHOIR FESTIVAL**  
5.8.18  
McLaurin Heights Baptist Church  
Register at <https://tinyurl.com/SenAdultChoirFest> and contact Church Music at 601-292-3267 for more information.

**WAR...FAIR?**  
IN YOUR MINISTRY  
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MINISTRY  
ASSISTANTS CONFERENCE  
GARAYWA • MARCH 19-20, 2018  
HOW TO REGISTER:  
Visit [www.tinyurl.com/2018MACent](http://www.tinyurl.com/2018MACent)  
Contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at [vcclary@mccb.org](mailto:vcclary@mccb.org) for more information.

**HeartSong Music Youth Camp**  
(6th-12th Graders)  
June 26-30, 2018  
Southwest Mississippi  
Community College  
Summit, MS  
Please contact Church Music for registration forms and more info at 601-292-3267 or visit <http://www.mccb.org/churchgrowth/church-music>.

**HOUSE TOPS**

# BIBLIOPHER

HR EBHR IAVSHX KBRVNSWT ORX  
ASUH WBN XR GW UETW EO ASKA  
MVSWHX; GDX AW XAEX HEST DOXR  
ASU, XARD EVX UJ HRO, XR TEJ AEZW  
S GWKRXWO XAWW.

AWGVWPH NSZW: NSZW.

Clue: Z = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans 10:9

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Just for the Record



**NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON**, held their annual Children's Mission Day in February. John Yates brought the message with help from his puppets. The children worked on five separate mission projects.



The **SCOTT COUNTY WMU** hosted a supper for their recent fashion models along with their mothers and grandmothers. Francis Sullivan, Belk representative, was part of one of the businesses that provided clothing for the girls' fashion runway show. Melissa Prestage spoke about the important roles of being a mother and grandmother.

## MS POSITIONS

**HILLSBORO BAPTIST CHURCH, HILLSBORO, MS** seeks a BI-VOCATIONAL OR FULL TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to pastor search committee, PO Box 122, Hillsboro, MS 39067.

**CASON BAPTIST CHURCH IN NETTLETON, MS** is seeking a BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Interested candidates can email resumes to casonbaptists@gmail.com.

**DREW BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking a BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR— Please email resume to: drewbaptistchurch@gmail.com or U S mail to Drew Baptist Church, 139 S Church St., Drew, MS 38737.

**TROY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH—PONTOTOC, MS** is seeking a BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER & A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please email resumes to bmcwhiter@stafast.com.

**CRENSHAW BAPTIST CHURCH** IS IN NEED OF A PART TIME SONG LEADER. Please call Nathan Perry at 901-606-4086.

**SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR—BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH.** Located at Meridian, MS in the Whynot community of Southern Lauderdale County. Please email resume to office@whynotbethany.org or mail to Bethany Baptist Church, 4475 Ponds Road, Meridian, MS 39301.

**TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH** is seeking a BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send Resumes to: 824 China Grove Rd. Jayess, MS 39641 or brodale54@bellsouth.net

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTICELLO, MS** seeking BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER. Send Resumes To: 618 Carmel-New Hope Rd, Monticello, MS 39654 Ph. 601-587-2862

## CLASSIFIEDS

**AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, AL.** Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach. www.gulfshorescondos.com, 251-856-4935, 205-556-0368, 251-752-2366.

**NEEDED PARK PASTOR.** Volunteer Position, 55+ RV Resort Community, Mission, TX Jan.-March 2019. Call 1-852-210-0458.

**GATLINBURG RENTAL:** Cabin \$95/night. Contact: 832-922-0401 or Email: pdw4760@att.net for information and booking.

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**PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE:** Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Deacon of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4608 or bennyhornsby.com

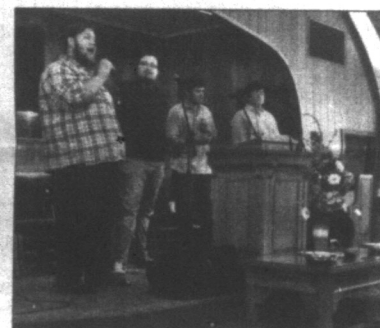
## In other Church News:

➤ **Salem Church, Lake,** will host the **Mike LeFevre Quartet Mar. 11, 6 p.m.** Love offering.

➤ **Lynn Ray Road Church, Petal,** will host **Buddy Lyles** in concert Mar. 11, 10 a.m. Love offering. **James Taylor,** pastor.

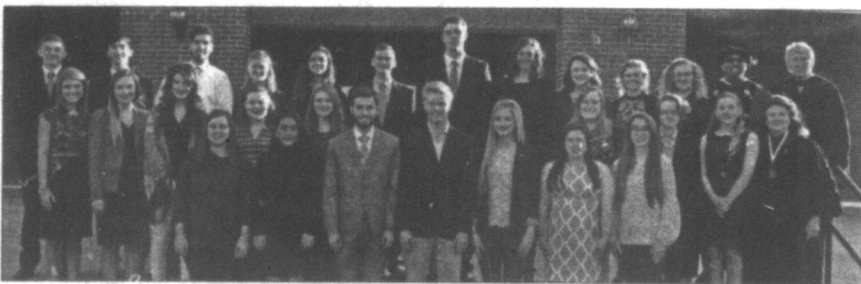


**RIVERPORT CHURCH, GREENVILLE,** celebrated Butch Nowlin's first anniversary as pastor. He is shown with his wife Patricia.



Four the King, a quartet from Southwest Mississippi Community College, sang Feb. 27 at **CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT.** Anita Alexander, L.I.F.E. organizer; Mike Burns, pastor.

## College News



The **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY** Alpha Chi National College Honor Society inducted 30 new members on Jan. 31. Pictured on the front row are officers Krystal Brown, Neetu Regmi, President Ian Pittman, Vice President Brian Cloys, Secretary Lydia Howard, Mikayla Giles, Haley Biglane. Inductees pictured are (second row, from left) Hannah Beech, Ashleigh Blakeney, Rachel Padgett, Jewel Shirley, Alexandra Green, Priscila Renard, Brooke Lane, Haley Cooley, and sponsor Read Diket; (third row) Caleb Golsen, Blaze Burkenstock, Sari Lada, Susan Neville, Emily Ennis, Austin Hannah, Logan Dowdy, Savannah Saucier, Emily Cox, Alexa Fisher, Mikaela Green, sponsors Everett Roark and Tom Richardson. Students not pictured: Abigail Alldredge, Emma Cotney, Mary Denton, James Herring, Joshua Knight, Katherine Martin, Rachel Smith.



## GRAHAM

cont. from p. 1

Graham's pastor, Don Wilton of First Church in Spartanburg, S.C., said in giving the invocation, "Mr. Graham had a profound and deeply spiritual conviction concerning the Word of God, the Bible. He loved the Bible. It governed how he lived, and it governed how he died. He believed the Bible teaches us the truth about God and Christ Jesus."

Other Southern Baptists in attendance included Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Steve Gaines, senior pastor of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, and SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page.

Among former SBC presidents in attendance were:

■ Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of multi-campus Cross Church in northwestern Arkansas;

■ Fred Luter, senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans.

■ Johnny Hunt, senior pastor of First Church Woodstock in Woodstock, Ga.

■ Jack Graham, senior pastor of Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas.

■ James Merritt, senior pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga.

■ Charles Stanley, senior pastor of First Church, Atlanta.

The presidents of at least five SBC entities were present: Danny Akin of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; Chuck Kelley of New Orleans Seminary; Paige Patterson of Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth; David Platt of the International Mission Board in Richmond, Va.; and Thom Rainer of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

Billy Kim, former president of the Baptist World Alliance and Graham's translator dur-

ing a 1973 crusade in Seoul, South Korea, was among speakers representing the international scope of Graham's evangelistic ministry.

Kim recalled the last time he saw Graham. He said the aging evangelist, whose eyesight and hearing were failing, told him tongue in cheek, "Let's have one more crusade in Korea."

Kim said at the church he pastored during Graham's Seoul crusade, "attendance was a mere 300. Now, after your crusade, there were more than 20,000 members. The rapid growth of the megachurch movement in Korea had started... all because you came to preach the Word to our people."

Tributes from Graham's children included recollections from his daughter Anne Graham Lotz about her father's practice of gathering everyone in his home for family devotions, even into his final days on earth. Graham's daughter Ruth Graham told how her father hugged her following a difficult divorce and greeted her with the words "welcome home."

"There was no shame," Ruth Graham said. "There was no blame. There was no condemnation, just unconditional love and you know, my father was not God but he showed me what God is like that day. When we come to God with our sin, our brokenness, our failure, our pain and our hurt, God says 'welcome home,' and

that invitation is open for you."

Graham's children also spoke of his love for his wife Ruth, who died in 2007. His sister Jean Ford, the evangelist's only living sibling, said Billy Graham's death reminded her of the song lyric, "Heaven came down."

Multiple speakers referenced Graham's longing for Heaven.

"The last few years, he became rather quiet. This last year of his life he said very little at all, and I believe that his mind was on Heaven," said Franklin Graham.

Franklin Graham also noted "a few things that my father would want me to share with you today," including explanations of the Gospel and that the Bible is the infallible Word of God.

"The world, with all of its political correctness, would want you to believe that there are many roads to God," Franklin Graham said. "It's just not true."

"My father would want me to share this with you today, that God sent His Son, His only Son from Heaven to this earth to take our sins, and He took our sins to the cross and He died in our place. He shed His blood for each and every one of you."

"He'll come into each and every heart that invites Him and if we'll repent of our sins and by faith believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says we will be saved. Daddy, I won't see you on this earth again but I will see you again."

## Prophecy Conference

At

Wheeler Grove Baptist Church

March 22-23

With

Dr. Robert Jeffress,

Pastor of First Baptist Church Dallas, TX



Thursday, March 22

Evening meal-6pm

Lovelace Family singing-6:45

Message "Not Left Behind!" by Dr. Jeffress-7pm

Break-7:45pm

Message "Rewards in Heaven" by Dr. Jeffress-8pm

Dismissal-9pm

Friday, March 23

Breakfast-9am

Message "How Can I Prepare For My Journey To Heaven?" by Dr. Jeffress-10am

Dismissal-11am

There is no registration fee or any other charge for this conference.

If you would like to register online, please go to [www.wheelergrovebaptist.com](http://www.wheelergrovebaptist.com).

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## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)  
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Glorifying God • 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

On a recent Sunday morning, Matt and Martha Messiness got out of their car, heading into the building that housed their Bible study classes. They'd had a fast-food meal the night before, and a few french fries had landed on the floorboard. Seeing this, Matt kicked them out on the pavement. Upon entering the building, they stopped by the welcome area to grab a cup of coffee and donut. Noticing the small trash can by the table was filled to overflowing, Martha tossed her sugary napkin on a nearby counter. "Someone else can take care of that," she decided. "Besides, I've got a class to teach." A rainstorm during the morning worship service left the grassy area near the parking lot soggy and soft. As the Messiness family got in the car, they were in hurry to get to the Chinese buffet before the nearby Methodist church let out, so Matt steered the car into the grass for a quick exit. "Oops, my bad," he created as he saw the deep rut he created.

You probably wonder where I'm headed with this comical story. If this were a real scenario, we'd all agree this couple showed great disrespect and lack of care for the church property, which we often call the "house of God." In actuality, our bodies are God's "house," and as such, how we

treat (or mistreat) them is of great consequence. The eight convicting verses we'll examine today call us to consider how to glorify God by employing self-discipline in the ways we use our bodies.

Paul begins today's focal verses by addressing a quote some in the church were using to excuse inappropriate behavior: "Everything is permissible for me..." (vs. 12 NIV). Because they had freedom in Christ, some wrongly concluded that this freedom allowed them to engage in ungodly actions. Paul countered with two "buts": "but not everything is beneficial" and "but I will not be mastered by anything." Yes, Christian liberty does bring freedom, but only to choose those things beneficial and that will not lead us again into bondage. Romans 6 elaborates on these truths: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies so that you obey its evil desires" (vs. 12). Further in this same chapter, Paul builds on this premise: "Surely you know that when

you give yourselves like slaves to obey someone, then you are really slaves of that person. The person you obey is your master. You can follow sin, which brings spiritual death, or you can obey God, which makes you right with him" (vs. 16 NCV).

"Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" was another saying these carnal believers used to rationalize their indulgence in fleshly desires. Paul countered by reminding them that

both the body and food would be destroyed (vs. 13). In this same verse, Paul nails down a case against sexual sin. He reminds

these believers that their bodies were part of Christ (vs. 15). He challenges them to consider the reprehensible absurdity of taking what belongs to Christ and joining it with a prostitute. When two come together in sexual union, it is as they are "one flesh" (vs. 16 NIV). However, our union with Christ makes us "one with him in spirit" (vs. 18).

"Flee from sexual immorality," Paul

sternly warns the Corinthians. The body of every Christian "is a temple of the Holy Spirit", the apostle reminds us (vs. 19). As such, we are not our own, "for God bought [us] with a high price" (vs. 20 NCV).

Today's lesson concludes by saying, "honor God with your body" (vs. 20). So how we can do that? The call to sexual purity is Paul's focus here, but as we consider the fact we actually house Christ's Spirit, we should avoid being like the Messiness family, who didn't properly care for their place of worship. Honoring God with our (his) temple can include getting proper rest, eating healthily, and exercising, enabling us to serve God better (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). We'll avoid engaging in activities and going places that dishonor the Lord (2 Timothy 2:22). We'll "clothe" ourselves properly (Colossians 3:12-14, Ephesians 6:10-18). Meditating on who we belong to will cause our tongue to speak words of kindness and witness, our hands to serve graciously, and our minds to soak up Scripture, that our feet would walk in God's ways (Psalm 119:133). Which of these areas warrants your closer attention in the coming days?

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



### Explore the Bible

with Ann Maniscalco

## Our Healer • Exodus 14:29-31; 15:22-27

Ralph Henson is my identical twin brother. We were born in Meridian, where he still lives, serving as pastor of both Life Baptist and Mountview Baptist. Though growing up, we resented each other as we each struggled for independence, over the years we became best friends. We talk on the phone daily now.

In September 2016, when I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma, a rare blood cancer, my wife and I drove to Meridian to tell my family. For Ralph, it was more than just hearing bad news, for I asked him if he would be willing to take part in a bone marrow transplant. He immediately said "Yes! Whatever I can do to help." No hesitation. That is a true friend. Then he asked what was involved, after he agreed to do it.

The transplant was in August 2017, after many months of chemo for me. In UMMC hospital, after I had received strong chemo for two days, which killed all my bone marrow, stem cells, white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets, Ralph had surgery to harvest his bone marrow and stem cells. They made four incisions across his upper pelvis and drilled twenty holes in each one. The doctors took a third of his bone marrow and many stem cells from the eighty holes in his

hip bones. He spent the night in the hospital down the hall from me. Ralph was sore for a week or so, and was a little anemic for a few months, as they expected. He is stronger every day, though, and is back to normal.

The same day Ralph gave his bone marrow, they put it in me by IV. I received two bags of bone marrow from him, and, over a few weeks, it started grafting to my then empty bones.

His marrow and stem cells are working, for I now have normal blood. The doctors are very pleased, and I am so grateful

to my brother. All the tests reveal no cancer and normal blood. I was healed by the blood, though this was not the first time for me.

As a young man, I was cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Ephesians 1:7 reads, "In him (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." So I was healed spiritually by the blood of Je-

sus, and then healed physically by Ralph's blood. I rejoice, for I have twice been saved by the blood. I can truly testify that there is power in the blood.

From all over Mississippi, church members prayed for me. I received more cards than I could ever answer. People prayed in South Korea, Romania, and over half of the states in our union. Most of the prayers, though,

were from Mississippians. To those in this state who prayed for me, thank you. My doctors were amazed at my progress

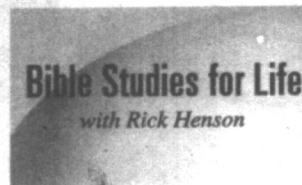
and healing, but I was not, for I knew I was lifted before God's throne daily by some awesome believers. Thank you for remembering me and calling on our healing God on my behalf.

One of God's many Old Testament names is Jehovah Rophe, or the Lord heals. The word rophe means to heal, restore, or cure. God delights in restoring-broken people to wholeness in Christ. He proved it the first time this

name of God was used in the Bible. The Israelites witnessed God's great victory over the Egyptian army yet complained about no water in the desert. How quickly they (and we) forgot would God can do. Exodus 15:23-24 reads, "And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: ... And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" (KJV).

God told Moses to place a particular tree from nearby in the water, and the water was no longer bitter. God miraculously healed the bitter water. They drank and were filled. God said to them in Exodus 15:26, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee," (KJV). The word rophe here, also means doctor. God is truly the Great Physician, and He can make you whole. I know firsthand, for Jesus healed my body, and Jesus healed my soul.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



### Bible Studies for Life

with Rick Henson





# Christian software takes center stage for weekend

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Bitcoin in the offering plate? Software allowing people to use cryptocurrency to give to churches was among the high-tech ideas under development at a February workshop at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

LifeWay hosted its Code for the Kingdom event at its new Nashville campus, where software developers worked long hours creating technology to serve the church. Participants from across the country made go-second pitches of their software ideas and then formed teams to work on projects throughout the weekend.

Tim Hill, LifeWay's senior vice president and chief information officer, told attendees LifeWay's new building was designed with technology in mind. "We knew we wanted to make collaboration easy. We wanted this facility to be high-tech, and it is."



**YOUNG PROGRAMMERS** — (Left photo) Software developers (from left) Kimberly Lannear, Brantley English, Zach Boatwright, and Chance Smith collaborate during the Code for the Kingdom event in February at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. Their proposed app, Gifted, matches people with ministry opportunities related to their spiritual gifts. (Right photo) Three eight-year-olds at the table (from left) Tyson Jones, Theodore Anderson, and Caden Frith assemble and program a robot during the Young Coders Workshop in February at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. With them is Caden's father, Chase Frith. (BP photos)



several participants brought sleeping bags or worked all night. Teamwork with other believers made the extended hours enjoyable, they said.

"The tech industry can be really intimidating," said Abby Fleming, a front-end developer from Lewisburg, Tn. "Here, if you have a question, you can take your laptop to another team and ask for help. It's not about competition, but collaboration."

Hallman, a Code for the Kingdom organizer who's been involved since the inaugural event in 2013, agreed.

"I've been to non-Christian hackathons where there's a heavy emphasis on winning a prize," he said. "Code for the Kingdom is more about helping others. I love seeing the cool projects that come out of it."

## Youthful coders

While teams worked on their projects Saturday morning, LifeWay simultaneously hosted a Young Coders Workshop for kids in third grade and up. The workshop introduced kids to the

basics of computer programming and encouraged an interest in electronics and robotics.

More than a dozen children worked in small teams with their parents to create robots they could control via smartphones.

Brian Ignatz, who attends Temple Church in White House, Tn., brought his daughter Anna to the event. "She's into coding and robots and didn't want to pass this up. I'm having a good time too. I like watching the kids engage in team-building."

## Future projects

After an onsite worship service on Sunday of the weekend, the six teams finished their projects and assessed the results, using four criteria:

- Kingdom impact: Would this product serve the church and equip its people?
- Viability: Could this be a real, sought-after product?
- Innovation/originality: Is there a unique quality to the proposed software?
- Completeness: How far did they get with their project?

Hallman and his teammates — fellow Tennesseans Stephen Bussard, Zach Boatwright, Kimberly Lannear, Brantley English, and Chance Smith — won first place for their proposed app, Gifted, which matches people with ministry opportunities according to their strengths.

Their win encouraged them to stay in touch and continue their work together. "There are a few tweaks we can make," Bussard said. "We're happy with the front end, and we will continue to collaborate online."

Conference organizers were pleased with the weekend. "We hope they continue the projects — and these relationships — be-

yond the weekend," said Adam Murray, a senior software engineer at LifeWay, "and we hope other people saw a project they liked and thought, 'I'd like to see that make it to the finish line.'"

Kevin Old, a front-end architect who came on board at LifeWay through the 2016 Code for the Kingdom event, said it only makes sense for LifeWay to sponsor an event like this.

"We need sponsors like LifeWay who want to reach people for Christ," Old said. "We have the technology, the space, and the content but in the end, it's not about the software. It's about the relationships and it's about ministry."

## Pitching ideas

Shamichael Hallman, a bivocational pastor from New Direction Christian Church in Memphis, presented the idea of an app to help church members use their spiritual gifts. "Once a person has taken a spiritual gifts assessment, I want to populate a list of church-specific ministries to get them immediately engaged."

"I think a lot of drop-off happens when people know their gifts but don't really know what to do with them." Other pitches included:

- Social media platform to help people connect over topics related to sermons.
- App for exchanging goods and services within the local church.
- Online directory of churches that contains sermon outlines and online giving information.
- App to help with Scripture memorization.

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